Ranger Rick's nature magazine

October 1975

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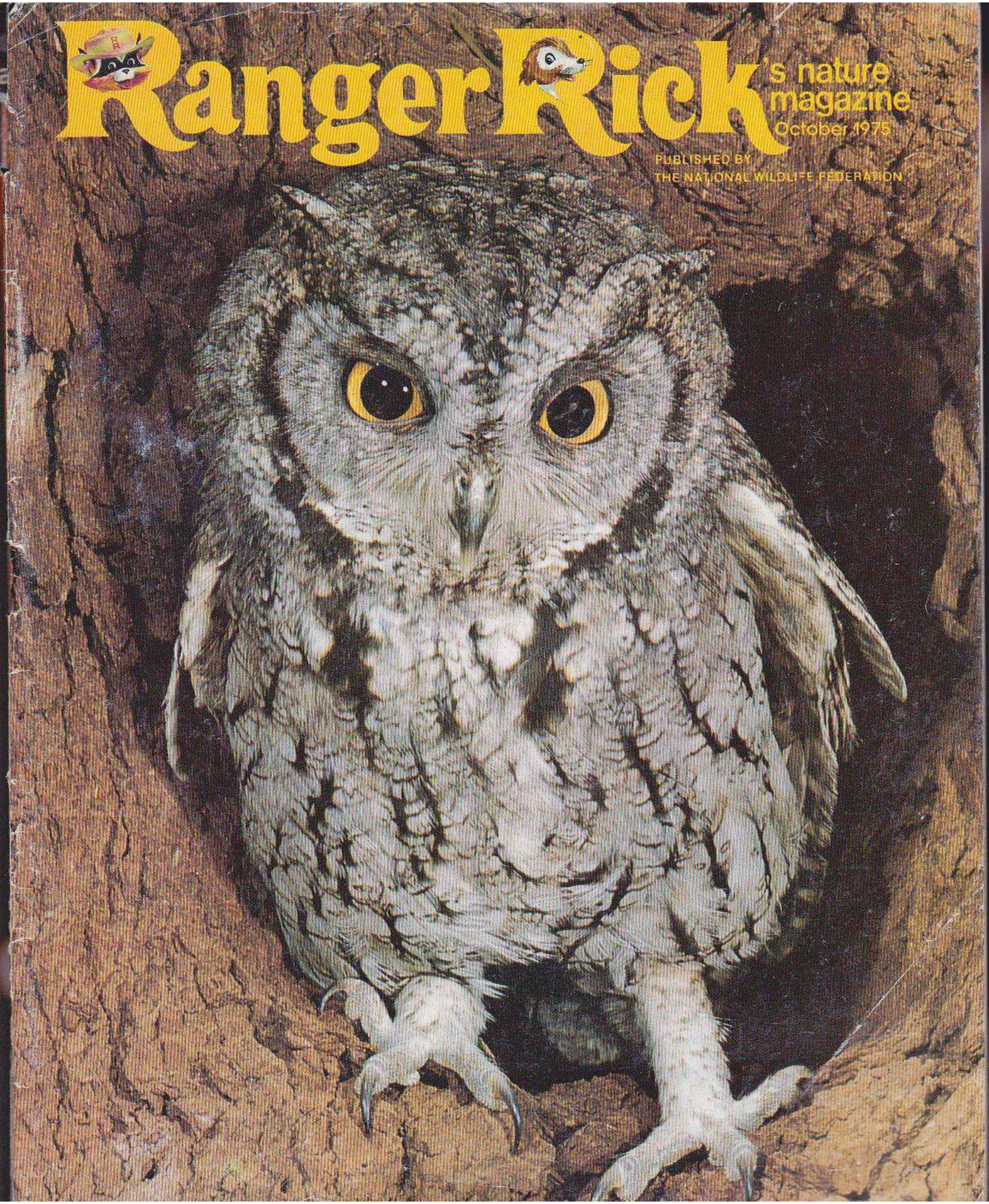

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To use my eyes to see the beauty of all outdoors.

To train my mind to learn the importance of nature.

To use my hands to help protect our soil, water, woods and wildlife.

And, by my good example, to show others how to respect, properly use and enjoy our natural resources.

_____

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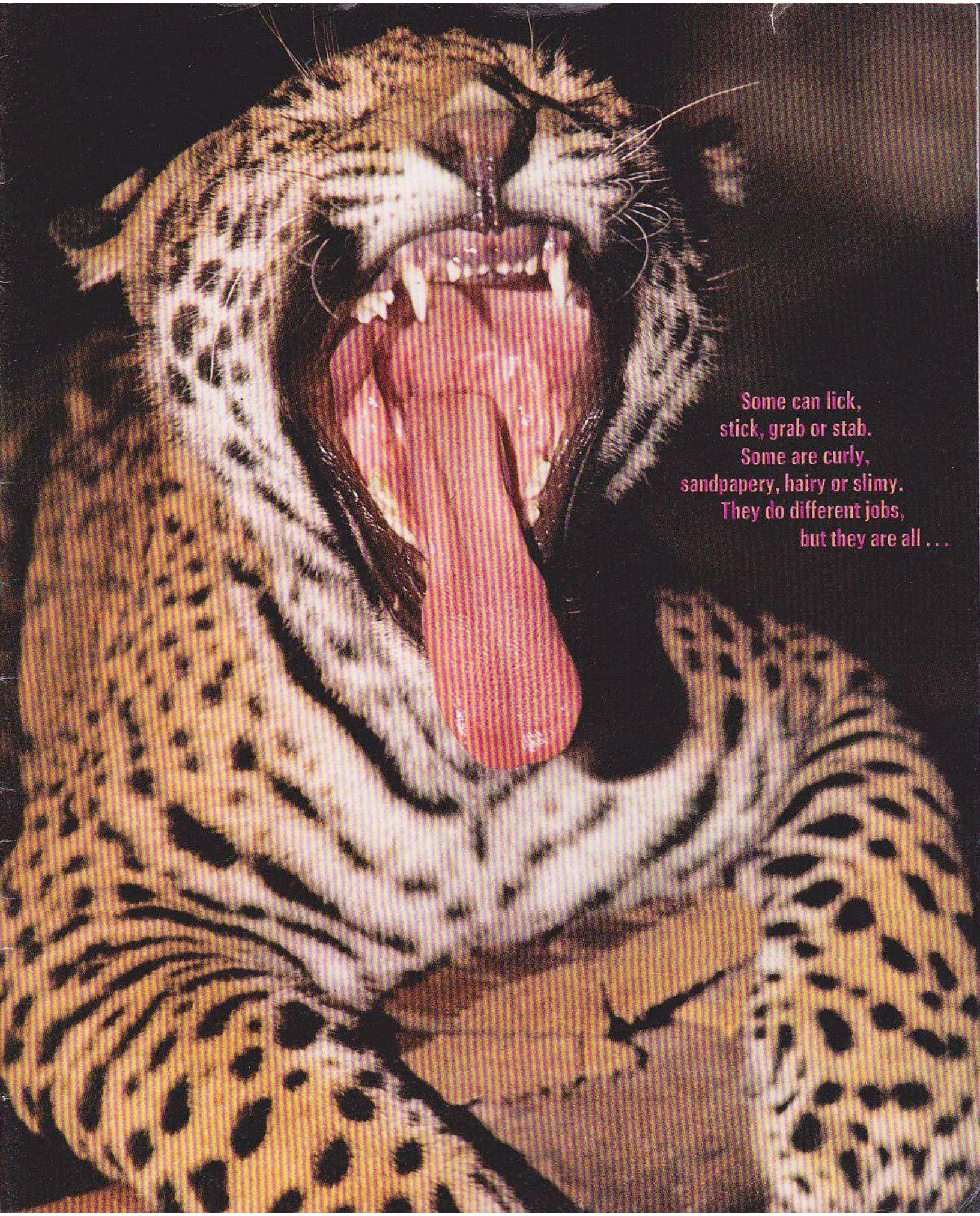

Some can lick,
stick, grab or stab.
Some are curly,
sandpapery, hairy or slimy.
They do different jobs,
but they are all . . .

by Shirley Meeker

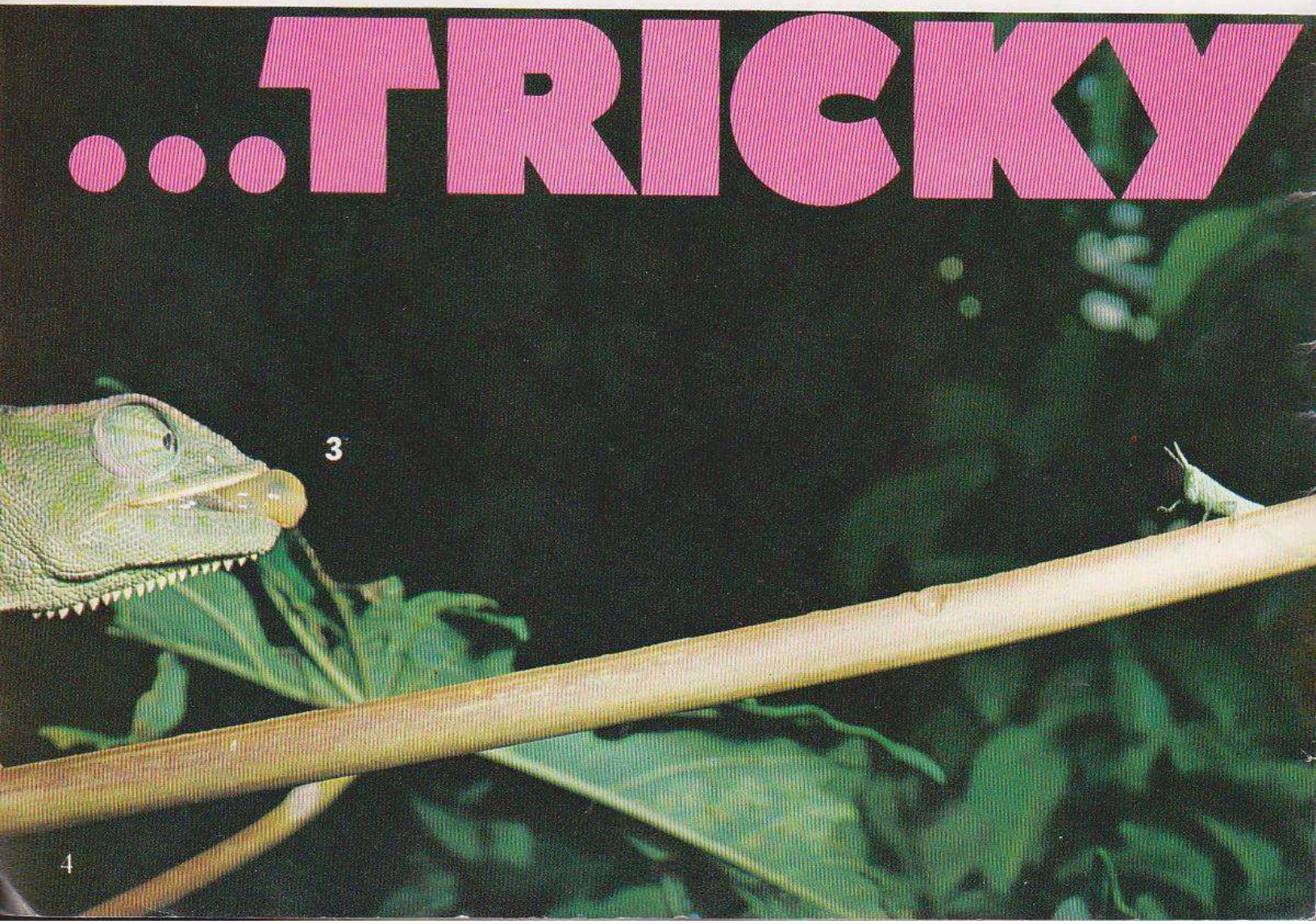
Stand in front of a mirror. Open your mouth wide and say "ah-h." What do you see? Your pink, flat tongue.

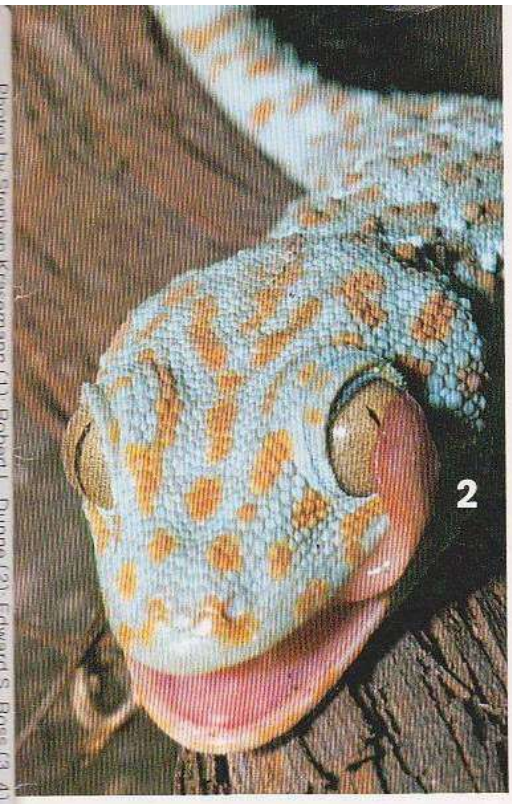
Your tongue is very important to you. It helps you chew and swallow your food. (Pay attention to how your tongue moves next time you eat!) It tells you whether your food is sweet or sour, salty or bitter, hot or cold. For you, a human being, it has an even more important job—it helps you talk!

Other animals need their tongues as much as you do, even though they don't speak. Some animals wouldn't have food if it weren't for their tongues, because their tongues are their most important tool for getting food. And they use their tongues to "handle" food as they chew and swallow.

Snakes (1) use their tongues for finding prey. When a snake flicks its tongue out, it picks up odors from the air and ground. When it draws in its tongue, it places it in or

...TRICKY





near two pits, called Jacobson's organ, located in the roof of its mouth. These pits do the same job your nose does—they smell. So, thanks to its tongue, a snake can follow the scent of an animal.

Once a snake has caught its prey and begins to swallow, it no longer needs the tongue. It just slips its tongue into a covering on the floor of its mouth.

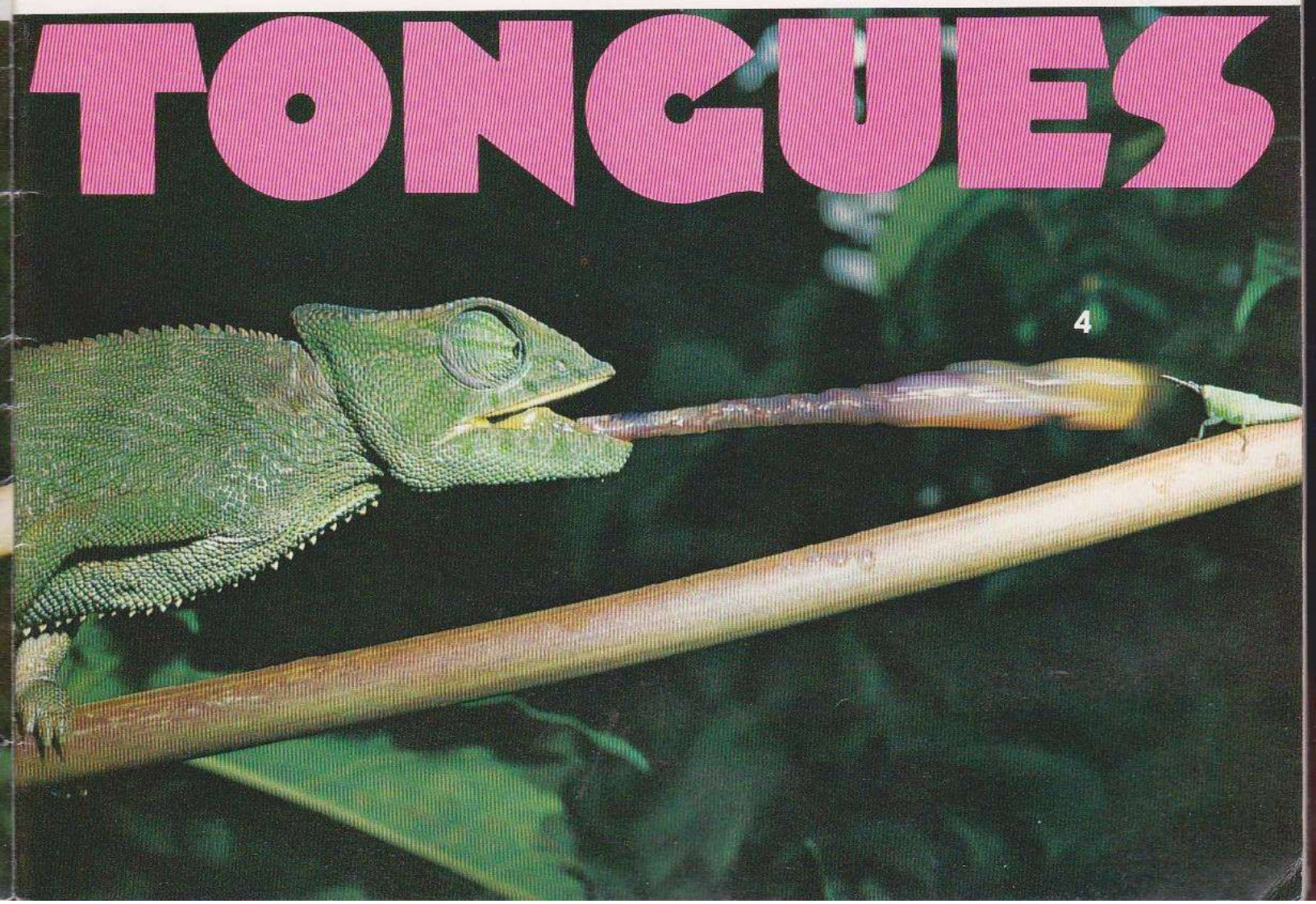
Geckos (2), a kind of lizard, usually use their tongues for picking up and swallowing their insect prey. But when the see-through coverings over their eyes get dirty, the geckos can flip up their tongues and wipe the coverings clean.

Most animals' tongues are attached at the back of the mouth. But the tongues of most *frogs* and *toads* and a few *salamanders* are attached at the front! They can shoot their sticky tongues forward to catch unsuspecting insects.

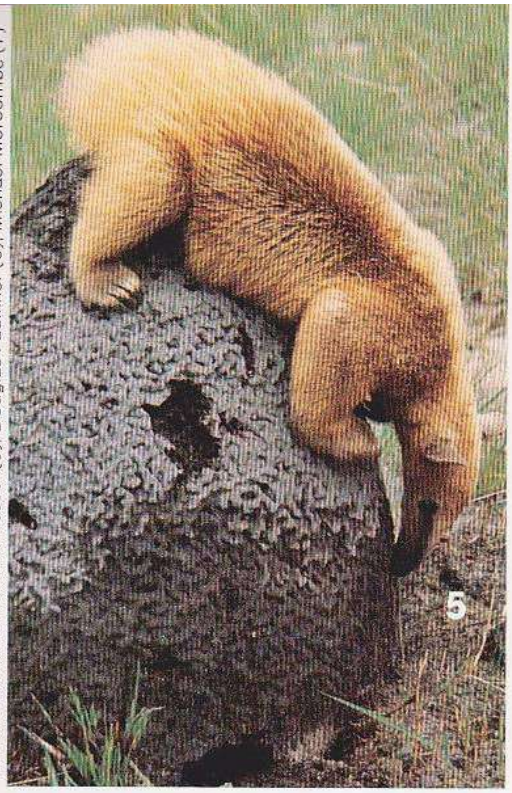
The stars of this shooting-tongue parade are the *chameleons.* Their tongues can reach a distance as long as

Please turn the page

TONGUES



Warren Garst/Tom Stack & Assoc. (5); Douglas Faulkner (6); Michael Morcombe (7)



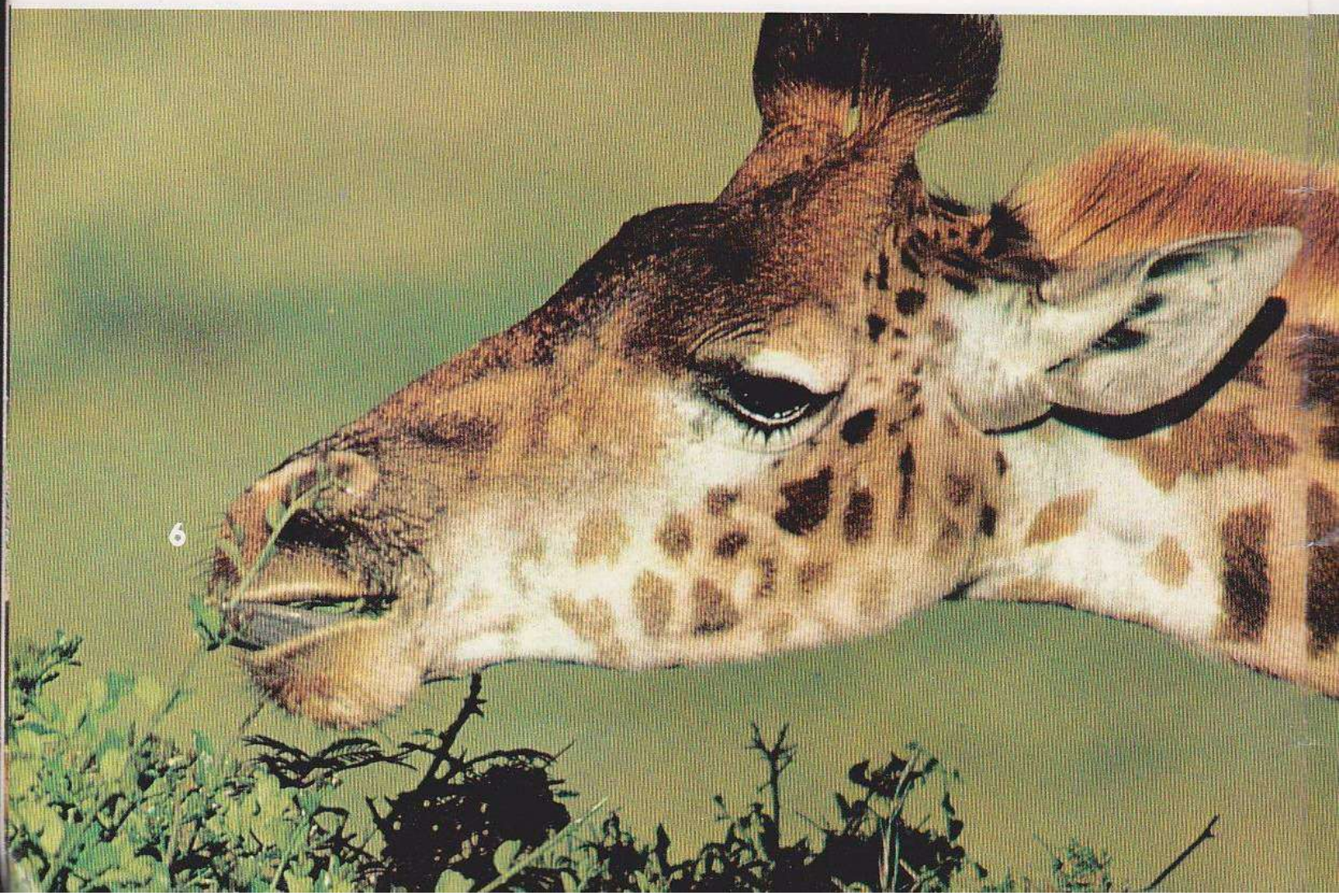
their body and tail, and even longer! Spying an insect with its bulging eyes, a *chameleon* slowly moves into striking range (3). In a flash—faster than your eye can see—the chameleon zips out its tongue, snares the prey with the sticky tip (4), and pulls it back into its mouth.

Where to keep this long tongue is no problem for the chameleon. When not using it, the chameleon bunches it up like a jack-in-the-box.

The *anteater* (5), would never be able to satisfy its giant appetite for ants and termites by picking them up one at a time. It has to get food in king-sized amounts—and its tongue helps it do this quickly and easily.

An anteater may search for ant and termite nests hour after hour. When it finds one, it tears the nest apart with its sharp front claws. Then it jabs into the nest with its 60-centimeter-long (2 feet) tongue and the insects stick by the hundreds!

They stick to it because the tongue is coated with



gluelike saliva. An anteater's tongue gets a new coating of saliva every time the animal draws the tongue back into its mouth.

Tree pangolins and *black-bellied pangolins* also love insects. They too have long tongues for gathering their food. Hanging upside down from a branch, they wait—sticky tongues ready—for a column of ants to climb toward them. As the ant column nears, the pangolins dart their tongues out—SLURP!—and in—GULP!

Giraffe (6) tongues are 55 centimeters (21 inches) long and prehensile (pre-HEN-sul). This means that they can curl their tongues around leaves and pull the leaves from trees. *Okapis* (oh-CA-peez), close relatives of the giraffes, have such long tongues they can use them to wash their eyes and ears.

Some mammals eat the nectar of flowers, and they have tongues just right for the job. One such animal is the *honey possum* (7), a tiny pouched mammal that lives

Please turn the page

in Australia. Its tongue is bristled like a brush at the tip. It's great for lapping up nectar and pollen from the blossoms of its favorite trees and shrubs. Ridges on the roof of the possum's mouth scrape off the food as it pokes its tongue out for another sample. Many flower-feeding *bats* have the same kind of brush-tipped tongue.

Hummingbirds (9) also feed on nectar, but their tongues are unlike any other animal's. The sides of a hummingbird's tongue curve upward and

Photos by John Tveten (8); Robert Leatherman/Photri (9); S.C. Bisserot/Bruce Coleman Inc. (10).

inward to form a tube! You can watch the movements of a hummingbird as it gathers food in slow-motion movies. It uses its tongue like a straw, sucking up tiny insects along with the juices of the flower.

Butterflies (10) and *moths* don't have tongues. Instead they have a mouth in the form of a long tube called a proboscis (pro-BOS-is). It works just like a hummingbird's tongue for sipping nectar from flowers. When they are not using this tube, they carry it coiled up like a watchspring under their chin.

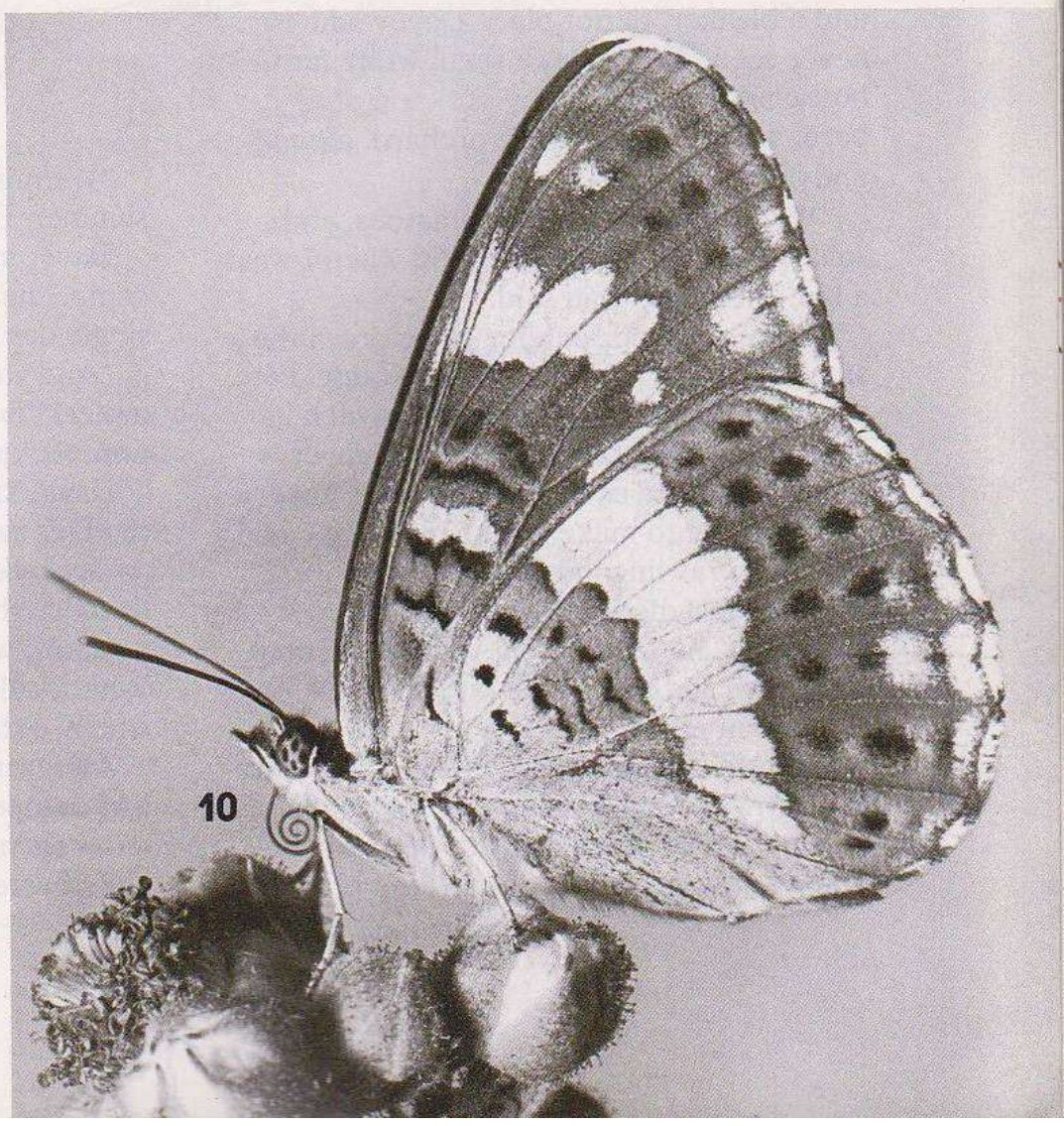
Members of the woodpecker family capture their prey with different types of slender, hard-tipped tongues. One common type of tongue is lance-shaped. *Woodpeckers* (8) use it to spear a favorite kind of prey—large insects. First the woodpecker uses its chisel-like bill to find an insect's tunnel in a dead tree. Then out comes the long tongue—twisting and feeling along the tunnel until ZAP! it stabs its prey.

Sapsuckers and some other woodpeckers have many fine bristles on the sides of their tongues much like those on a brush, and perfect for lapping up tree sap. Other woodpecker tongues have areas covered with sticky saliva, which traps insects crawling in tree cracks or in anthills.

Other birds have tricky tongues too. After a *cockatoo* splits a nut with its hooked beak, its strong tongue slips in and picks out the meat. *Penguins* and many other fisheaters have hard spikes on their tongues that push and guide their slippery prey into a swallowing position.

If you have ever been licked by a cat you certainly noticed how rough its tongue felt. The center of a cat's tongue is covered with short, fat, pointed bumps. These bumps help cats lick meat off the bones of prey. They also work like the teeth of a comb when they clean themselves. But cats (and dogs too) need their tongues for another very important job: telling you how much they *like* you!

Not every animal's tongue may be as exciting as a chameleon's or as friendly as a cat's, but it does the job it has to do. Next time you see a tongue in action, take a really close look at it. Is it licking, sticking, grabbing or stabbing? *The End*



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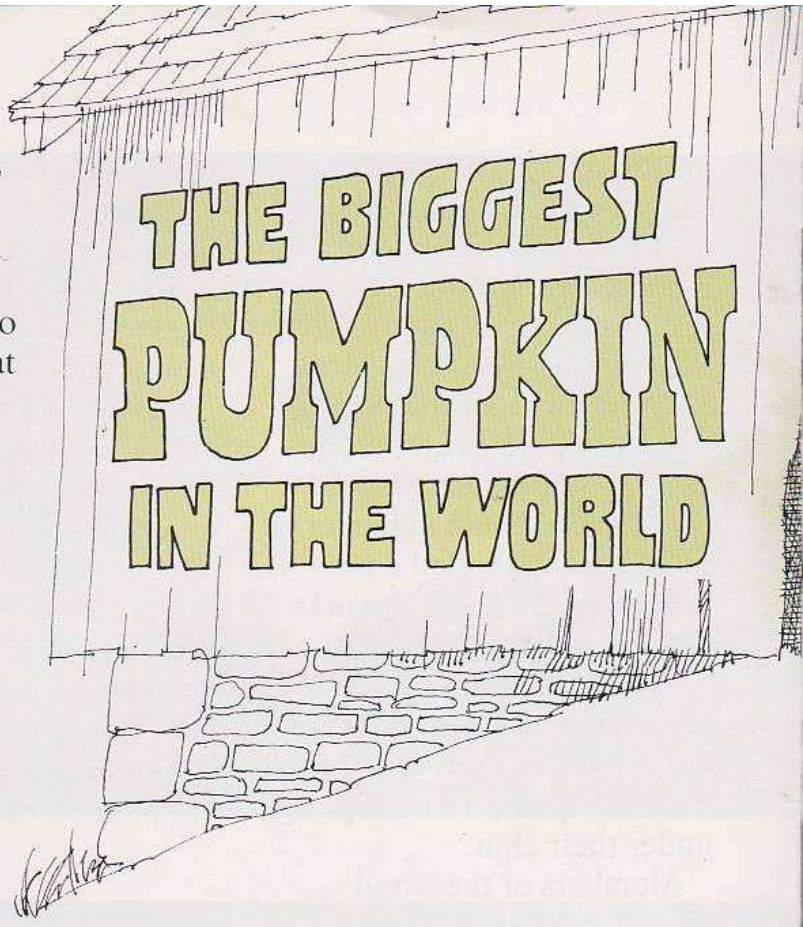

by Patchell Mason

Summer was over. With a heave and a sigh, Davey put the last bucket of garbage into the back of the family station wagon. He braced it with the box of toys which his little sister, Jennifer, packed every weekend to take to the farm. He checked to be sure that all six bucket lids were tightly closed.

"All set?" asked his father from the kitchen door.

"All set," said Davey. He slammed the tailgate, rolled up the window and got into the back seat. He slumped into his favorite position, halfway between lying down and sitting up. He chewed on his lower lip. "I'm nothing but the royal garbage man around here," he muttered to himself. "And all because of that stupid farm."

The farm was Davey's father's idea. He had bought it during the previous winter—and a bleaker, flatter place Davey had never seen. There was a small white farmhouse and a sagging gray skeleton of a barn, an overgrown apple orchard, a pond and 50 acres of dirt.

"We'll plant beans, and tomatoes, and squash, and corn, just like I did when I was a kid," his father had said.

Davey watched Jennifer come down the steps. Close on her heels was their dog, Pete, who was staring at the bacon sandwich in her hand. Davey felt a twinge of hunger. Lately it seemed as if he were always hungry.

"I'm going to make mud pies today," said Jennifer, crawling in beside him.

Davey fastened her seatbelt for her.

"Great," he said. He shoved Pete's rump off his lap and received a big, juicy lick on his nose in return.

Soon the station wagon was zipping down the highway. On either side of the road, pyramids of dry cornstalks dotted the fields. The world was turning orange and brown.

"We missed having you on the farm this summer, Davey," said his father.

Davey shrugged. "I had a good time at camp," he said. "We went swimming every single day except one."

"And you didn't have to carry any garbage either, I'll bet," said his mother. There was a mischievous twinkle in her eyes.

Davey's cheeks burned. How well she had read his thoughts.

"Just wait until you see what's happened to the garbage," said Davey's father.

Davey wondered what his father meant. What could possibly happen to a pile of smelly old garbage?

All during the winter and spring, Davey had dumped potato peelings, eggshells and leftovers into a trench behind the barn. He had covered each week's garbage with old

straw. As far as he was concerned, he would rather have been climbing apple trees in the orchard or catching fish in the pond.

Finally they arrived at the farm. The station wagon stopped in front of the house. Everyone piled out, grateful for a chance to stretch. Jennifer dashed off to find a mud puddle. Pete dashed off to hunt for rabbits. And Davey's mother went inside to fix lunch.

"Come on," said Davey's father. He grabbed two of the garbage buckets and struck off toward the barn. Davey followed, lugging two more. It was a long walk.

Please turn the page

Drawings by Richard Cuffari

By the time they reached the barn Davey's fingers ached and his breath came in gasps.

"So where's the surprise?" he wheezed.

Davey's father laughed. "Last spring," he said, "I planted a pumpkin seed in your trench. I wanted to show you what garbage can do. Take a look."

Davey walked around the barn. A leafy vine as thick as Davey's arm sprouted in all directions like some crazy beanstalk. It covered the barnyard fence. It rambled here, it rambled there, and everywhere it nourished bright orange pumpkins.

"I've never seen so many pumpkins," said Davey, amazed in spite of himself.

"The best is yet to come," said Davey's father. "Suppose you see where this vine goes." He pointed to a vine near his foot.

"Okay," said Davey. "Oh, look. It goes through that opening in the barn wall."

Curious about what the vine had done, Davey ran around to the barn door and went inside.

His eyes adjusted quickly to the dusty sunlit interior. The smell of hay, wood and leather was pleasant, but Davey scarcely noticed it. All his attention was focused on the mammoth vine that inched along the barn floor and curled up the ladder into the hayloft! Carefully, so he wouldn't bruise the vine, Davey climbed up the ladder.

When he reached the top of the ladder he stopped and drew in a deep breath, for there in the soft, warm light glowed **a pumpkin three times as big as any other pumpkin Davey had ever seen!** It nestled in the hay, as round and perfect as an egg in a nest, only orange and humpy.

"Wow!" said Davey with a whistle. He crawled over to it. "What a jack-o'-lantern you're going to make. Not to mention about a million pumpkin pies!" A thoughtful expression crossed his face. "Garbage," he said. Suddenly he giggled and, rolling over and over in the hay, said, "Garbage isn't so bad after all."

The End

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RANGER RICK'S NATURE CLUB – The young people's membership program of the National Wildlife Federation, a non-profit, non-government conservation organization.

Dear Wise Old Owl,
I peeked at page 37 while Ranger Rick was putting this issue together. Boy, those voles were big eaters! How did Mr. Jackman get those great pictures? Zelda Possum, Deep Green Wood

English photographer Leslie Jackman caught the voles in a live trap, put them in an open-air cage, and added one big juicy turnip. Then he set up an automatic camera to snap photos of the voles as they chomped and chewed—on and off—for 10 days and nights. The voles had a free feast—and Mr. Jackman got some fabulous photos!

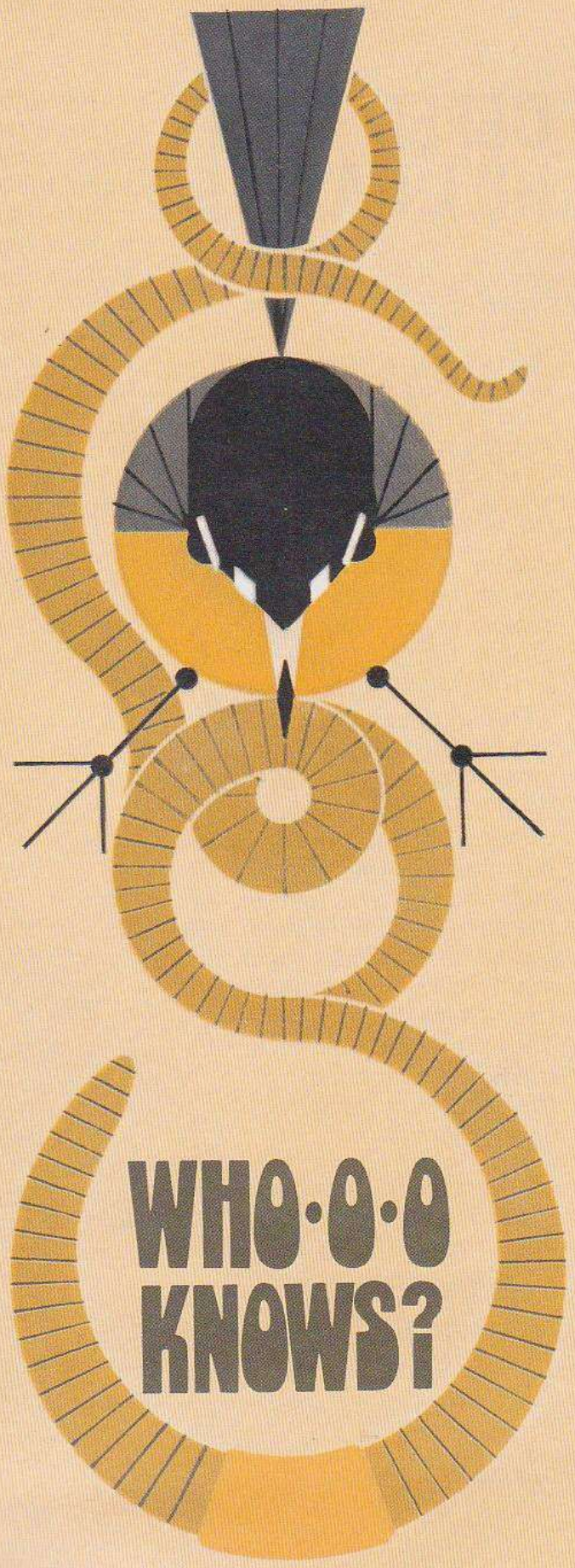
Dear Wise Old Owl,
Why do birds eat worms?
Heidi Zimmerman, Age 7, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Not all birds do. Different birds eat different foods. Dinner for a hawk or an owl can be a mouse or a rabbit. Vultures eat dead animals, and flycatchers dart after flies and mosquitos. Woodpeckers drill into trees to find carpenter ants and bark beetles.

The shape of a bird's beak is a clue to what it eats. Most ducks and swans have wide bills that scoop up plants and animals from the mud. Seed-eaters—like finches and cardinals—have short fat beaks that break open hard seeds. Owls, hawks and eagles have hooked beaks that are good for tearing flesh, and nuthatches use their thin beaks like tweezers to pick up tiny insects in bark or among the leaves.

The robin's sharp beak is a good tool for jabbing into the ground and grabbing an earthworm or beetle grub. Robins eat fat, juicy earthworms for the same reason you eat fat, juicy steaks—it's food!

It's a good thing that robins don't live in Australia, where giant earthworms are almost as long as a Volkswagen! Then there might be some very, very fat robins hopping around and chirping, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing!" *The End*



Drawing by Charles Harper

DEFENSE OF HILL CASTLE

by Pat Decker Tapio

"Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra!"

The alarm rang throughout the court as soldiers scrambled to their battle positions. Workers left their jobs and either ran to join the soldiers or scurried for cover. Castle servants hurried to protect the queen.

What is it this time? they wondered, though it didn't really matter. They knew only that a new threat had come to Hill Castle.

One of the soldiers took time to pass the message along. It spread rapidly: **"A dragon is on its way to Hill Castle!"**

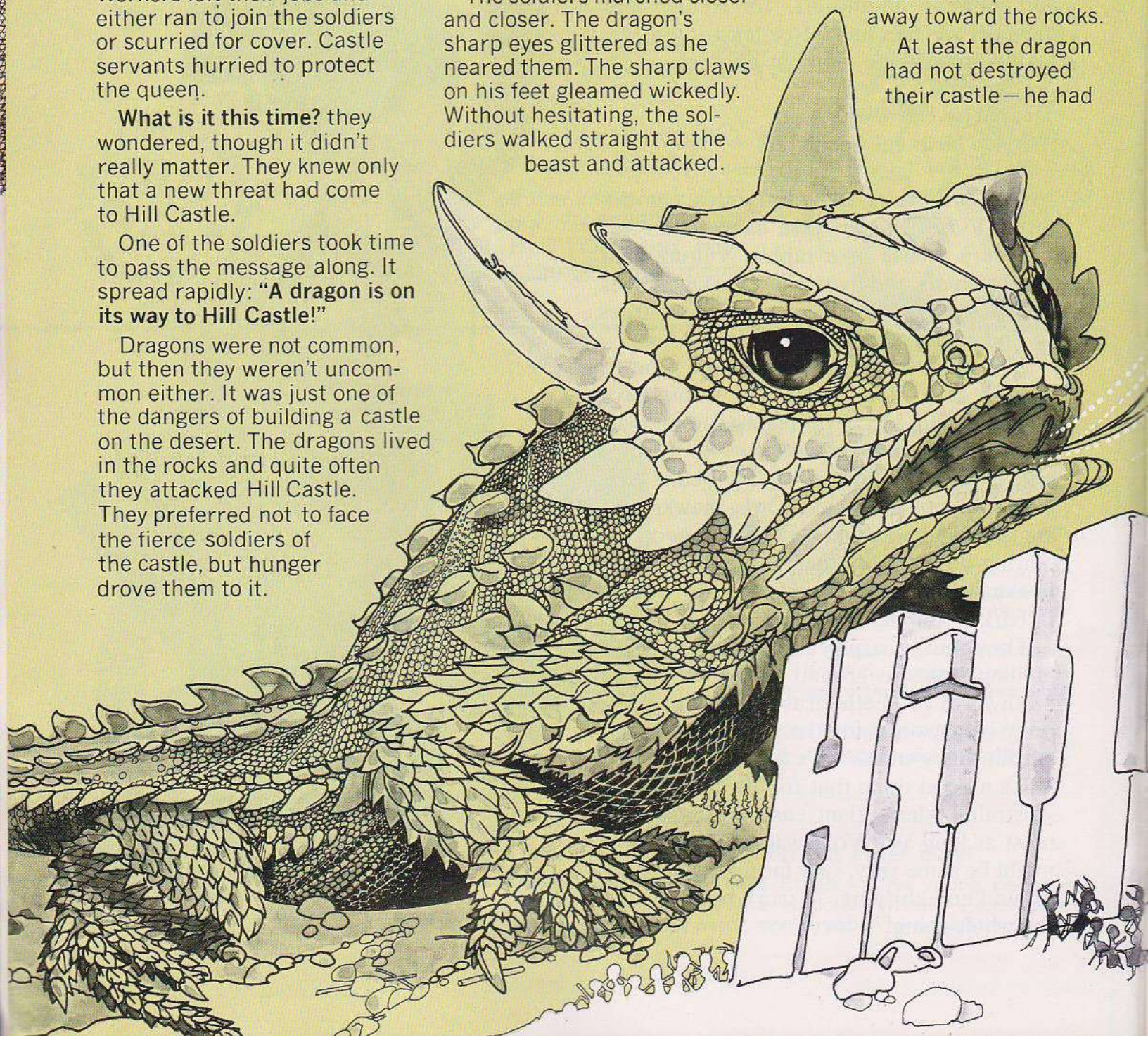
Dragons were not common, but then they weren't uncommon either. It was just one of the dangers of building a castle on the desert. The dragons lived in the rocks and quite often they attacked Hill Castle. They preferred not to face the fierce soldiers of the castle, but hunger drove them to it.

Now another dragon was on his way. The ground shook as he came nearer. From the top of the hill, the soldiers could be seen marching toward the monster. They never stopped—even though a forked tongue slithered from the reptile's mouth and his scaly tail switched from side to side.

The soldiers marched closer and closer. The dragon's sharp eyes glittered as he neared them. The sharp claws on his feet gleamed wickedly. Without hesitating, the soldiers walked straight at the beast and attacked.

The first hundred soldiers were licked up by the beast's tongue. Several hundred more were squashed under his feet. But more soldiers kept coming and soon they overcame the monster. He roared his pain and fury as they attacked again and again. He licked and squashed a few hundred more, then turned around and plodded away toward the rocks.

At least the dragon had not destroyed their castle—he had



not even gotten past the outer limits. Dragons were easier to deal with than giants!

The soldiers picked up their dead and wounded and started marching back to Hill Castle. It was all in a day's work for them.

Back at the castle, life was returning to normal. The soldiers had defeated the dragon. The castle was safe! Soon it was all as if nothing had happened. The builders left their shelters and resumed working on the castle's walls. The nurses bustled about the nursery. The workers returned to guard the seeds stored in the castle's underground storerooms. Grain-hunters went back to work outside the castle walls, gathering seeds and carrying them to the castle.

Several weeks passed. The castle hummed with activity. The weather was warm and inviting and many workers climbed to the top of Hill Castle to soak up the desert sun. Soon it would be too hot to come outside.

Suddenly the sun was blotted out! A dark shadow fell over Hill Castle. The workers fled in panic as the message went out: **"A giant is coming!"**

Quickly the army gathered. Many workers hurried to join the soldiers. Survival was clearly at stake this time! Giants move swiftly, unlike the slow-moving dragons. The very size of their enormous feet could destroy weeks of building in one swift kick. The army gathered together in desperate but orderly haste. They swiftly marched out to meet the giant.

But before they could attack, the giant's foot stepped on part of the castle and flattened it until there was only a small mound of earth to show where it had been. The soldiers quickly swarmed over the booted foot and on up the leg, climbing without fear or thought of safety. Once up the boot, they crawled down inside and began attacking the giant's flesh.

"Ouch!" screamed the giant, with a voice that boomed like a hundred cannons.

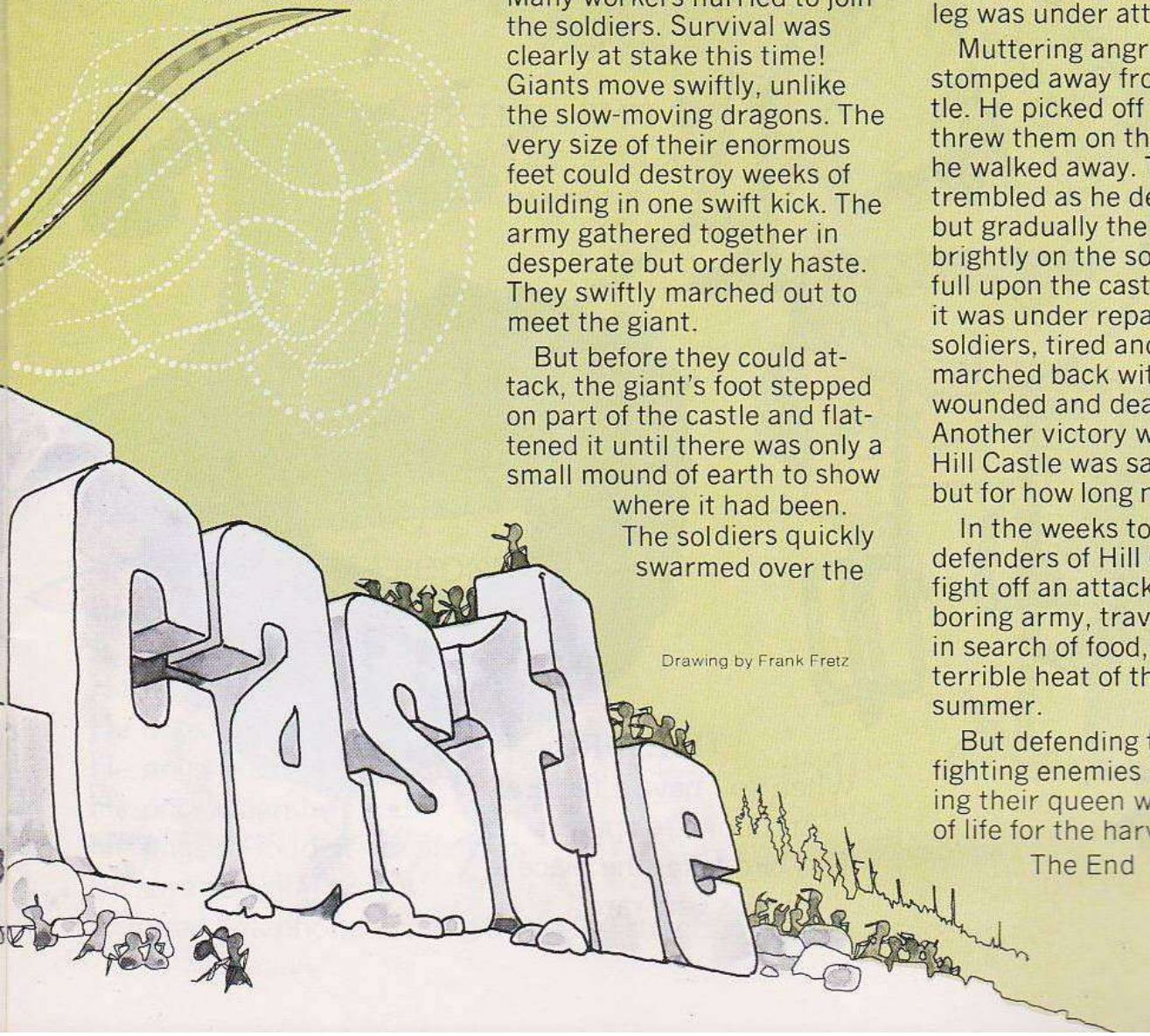
His huge hand swept down over his boot, scattering dead and wounded soldiers right and left. The fierce attack inside the boot continued, soldiers slashing, ripping, tearing, piercing any bit of flesh they could reach. The giant tore off his boot and brushed away the last of the soldiers; but now his other leg was under attack.

Muttering angrily, he finally stomped away from Hill Castle. He picked off soldiers and threw them on the ground as he walked away. The ground trembled as he departed, but gradually the sun shone brightly on the soldiers and full upon the castle. Already it was under repair as the soldiers, tired and weary, marched back with their wounded and dead comrades. Another victory was theirs. Hill Castle was safe again—but for how long nobody knew.

In the weeks to come, the defenders of Hill Castle would fight off an attack by a neighboring army, travel far afield in search of food, and face the terrible heat of the desert summer.

But defending their home, fighting enemies and protecting their queen were all a way of life for the harvester ants.

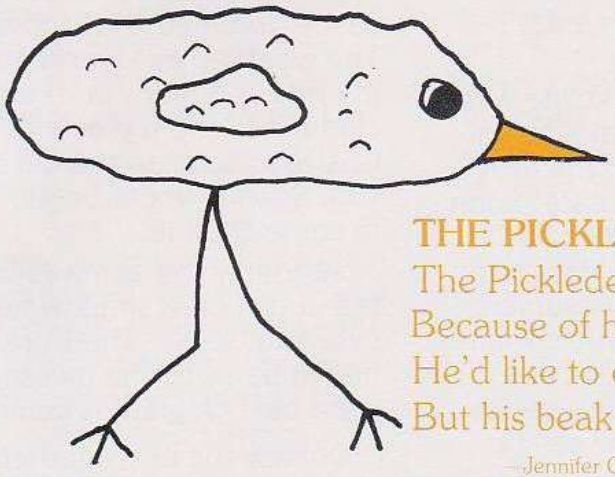
The End



Drawing by Frank Fretz

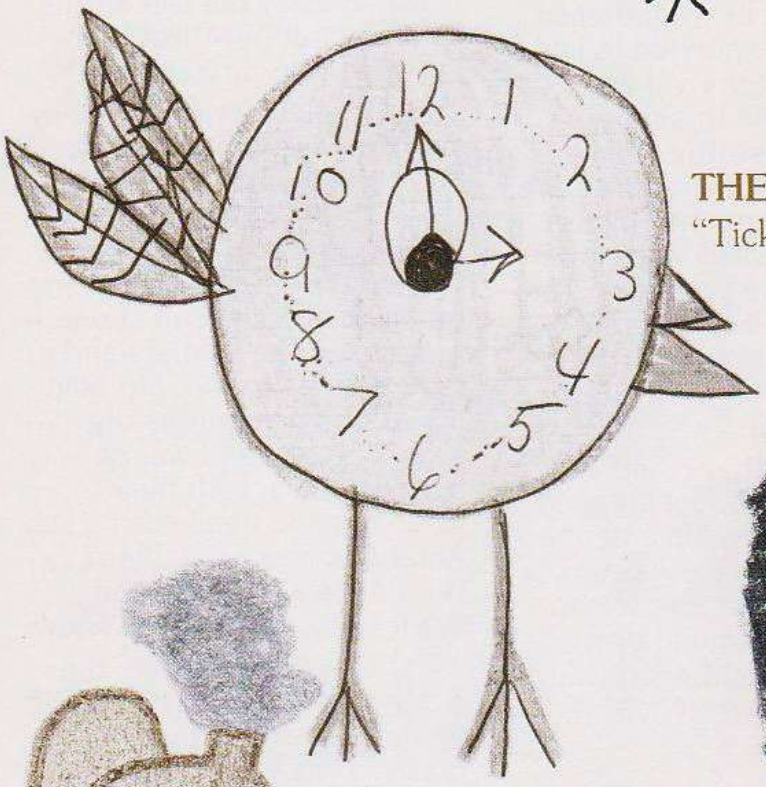
ollie otter's

Wow! Your minds really went to work thinking up strange creatures like those Arnold Lobel did in "Ice Cream Cone Coot" (December 1974 issue). We have piles and piles of your drawings—and we love every one of them. Here are just a few Ranger Rick and I thought you would enjoy. (Keep an eye out for more "strange-creature drawings" in future issues.) Ollie Otter



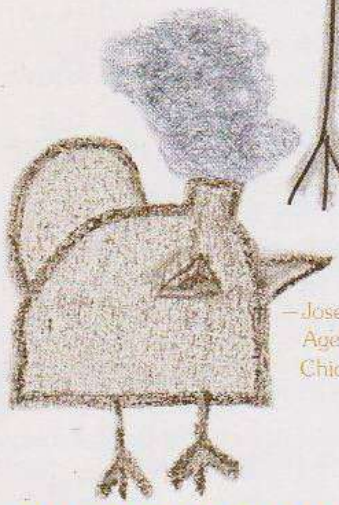
THE PICKLEDEE
The Pickledee has a problem
Because of his beak.
He'd like to eat pickles,
But his beak is too weak.

—Jennifer C., Age 10,
Northridge, California



THE TIME-TELLER BIRD will only say, "Tick-Tock," all the long day.

—Marla Bobowick, Age 8,
Toledo, Ohio



—Josephine Petrizzo,
Age 10,
Chicago, Illinois

THE TEAPOT BIRD

TIRE BIRD
When you have a flat tire,
And none to spare,
This bird takes the place—
And it's very rare!

—Connie Collins, Age 6,
Independence, Kansas

fun pages

THE TARGET TERN

The Target Tern
Can never rest,
He must avoid
That darting pest!

—Jeff Harding, Age 12,
Manhattan Beach, California

THE TUFTED TELEPHONE

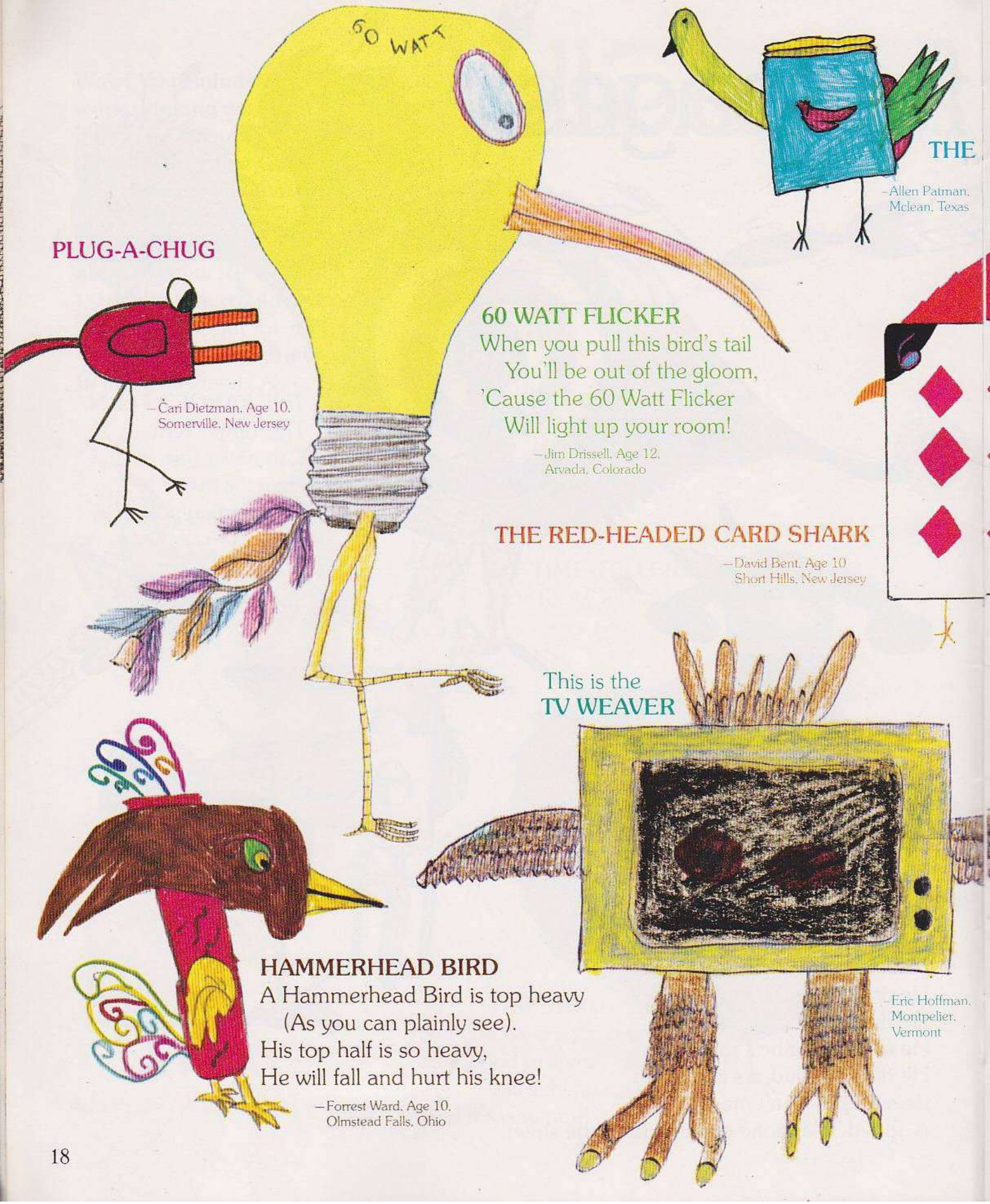
Be sure you don't meet
A Tufted Telephone.
He rings when he's angry,
He rings when he's glad.
He rings when he's excited,
He rings when he's sad.
He rings so loud, it's deafening.
Be sure you don't meet
A Tufted Telephone coming down the street.

—Judy Van Raalte

THE MIXADEE

The Mixadee, you must agree,
Is certainly very handy,
For making cakes and cookies and dough,
And even sugar candy!

—Paul Houser,
Grand Island, New York



PLUG-A-CHUG

—Cari Dietzman, Age 10,
Somerville, New Jersey

60 WATT FLICKER

When you pull this bird's tail
You'll be out of the gloom,
'Cause the 60 Watt Flicker
Will light up your room!

—Jim Drissell, Age 12,
Arvada, Colorado

THE

—Allen Patman,
Mclean, Texas

THE RED-HEADED CARD SHARK

—David Bent, Age 10
Short Hills, New Jersey

This is the TV WEAVER

—Eric Hoffman,
Montpelier,
Vermont

HAMMERHEAD BIRD

A Hammerhead Bird is top heavy
(As you can plainly see).
His top half is so heavy,
He will fall and hurt his knee!

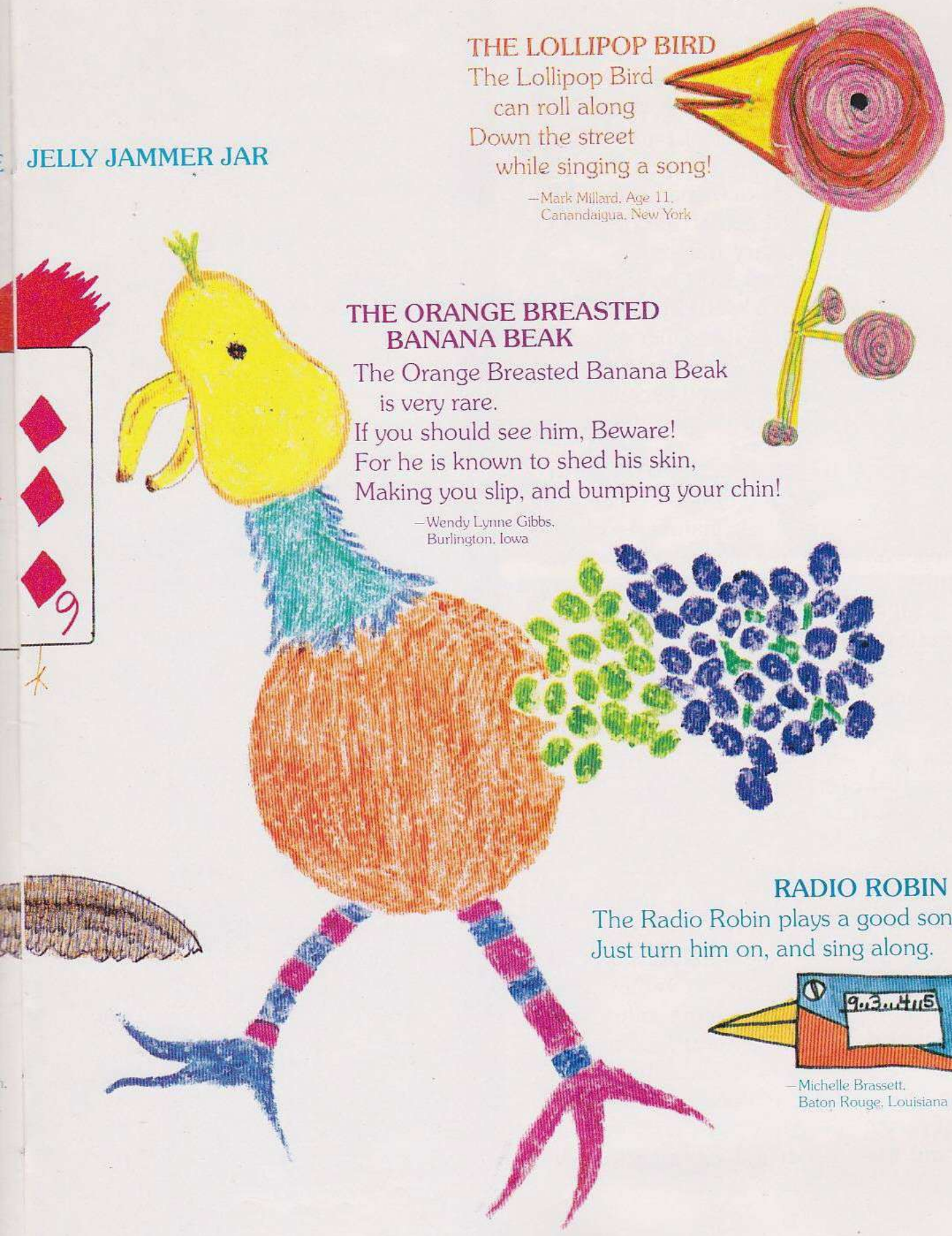
—Forrest Ward, Age 10,
Olmstead Falls, Ohio

JELLY JAMMER JAR

THE LOLLIPOP BIRD

The Lollipop Bird
can roll along
Down the street
while singing a song!

—Mark Millard, Age 11,
Canandaigua, New York



THE ORANGE BREASTED BANANA BEAK

The Orange Breasted Banana Beak
is very rare.
If you should see him, Beware!
For he is known to shed his skin,
Making you slip, and bumping your chin!

—Wendy Lynne Gibbs,
Burlington, Iowa

RADIO ROBIN

The Radio Robin plays a good song.
Just turn him on, and sing along.

—Michelle Brassett,
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

by Sigmund A. Lavine

When you think of black magic, ghosts and witches, do you also think of bats? Lots of people do! Maybe this is because bats live in dark caves and are active at night. And when some people think of darkness and bats, they think of scary things.

This bad reputation is most unfair to bats. No bat can cast an evil spell! Most real bats are just as harmless as the paper bats that decorate tablecloths at Halloween parties. But bats continue to be feared because most people know little about them.

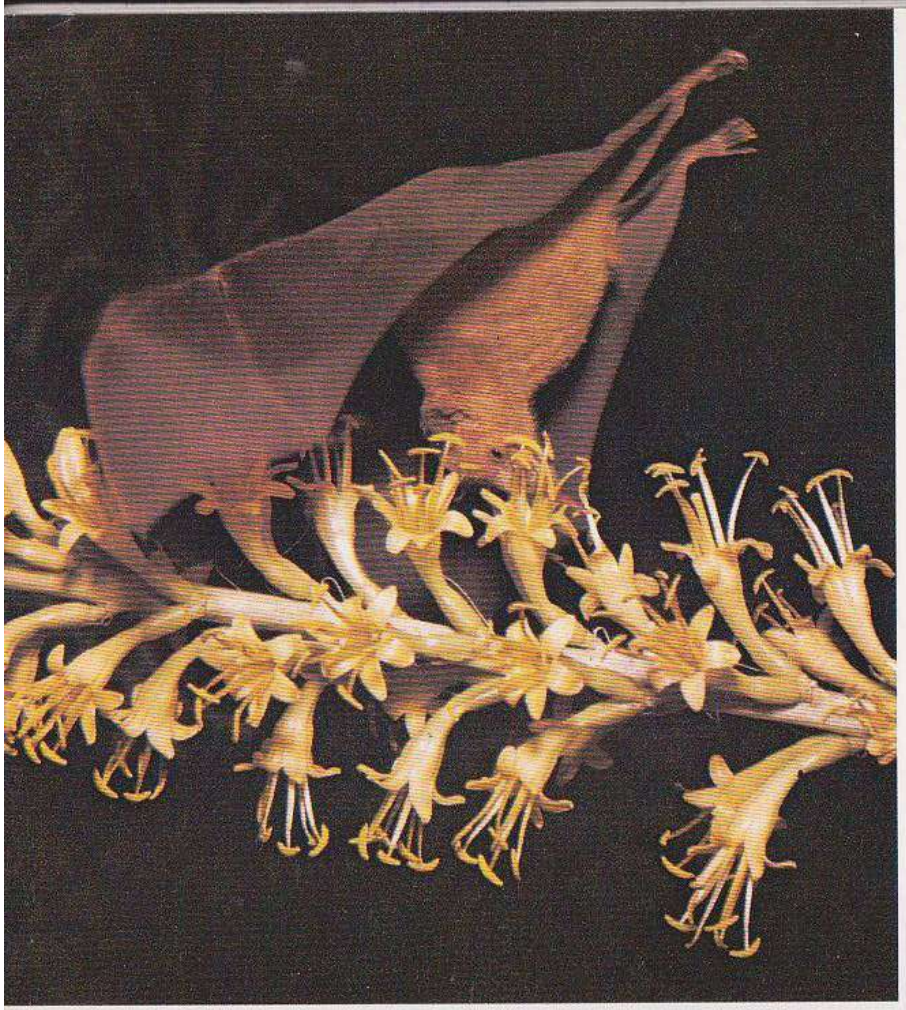
How many bats live on earth?

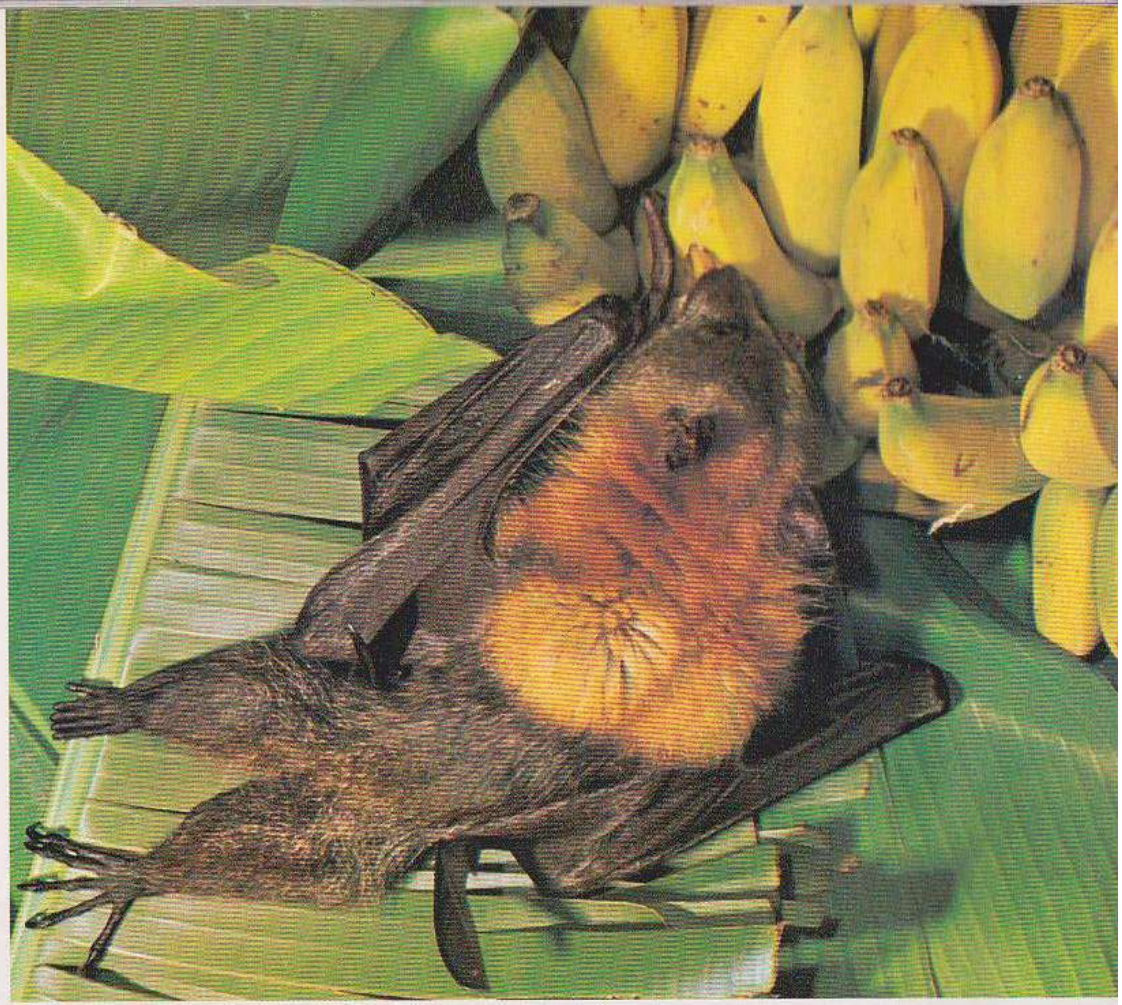
Billions and billions and billions! There are more bats than any other mammal—except rodents. And they live almost everywhere! Scientists have found about 850 species of bats in all parts of the world except in the Antarctic, the Arctic tundra and on a few isolated oceanic islands. Most bats live in the tropics.

What do bats eat?

Almost all North American bats dine on insects. However, there are fruit bats that eat flowers, fruit, nectar and pollen. Some bats feast on blood. Other bats eat fish, small mammals and birds.

Bats' feeding habits may be harmful to people. For example, in the tropics, certain fruit bats cause large losses to farmers. Vampire bats sometimes transmit rabies when they bite livestock. But, more often than not, bats are helpful. Flower-feeding bats pollinate flowers just as bees do. Insect-eating bats destroy billions of destructive pests every night. And "bat caves" contain tons and tons of bat manure that farmers use for fertilizer. *Please turn the page*





Photos by Laura Riley; Bruce Hayward; Graham Pizzey

Can bats really fly?

No matter where they live, all bats have one thing in common. They are the only mammals that really fly. (Mammals such as flying squirrels are misnamed. They don't fly at all—they just *glide* through the air.)

A bat's wings are thin, leathery, elastic pieces of skin that stretch between its body and its long arms and fingers. You can get an idea of what this skin is like by spreading the thumb and first finger of your hand. Now use the fingers of your other hand to pinch the double layer of skin that is stretched thin. That's a little like a bat's wing—only the bat's wing is much bigger and stretches from all its fingers to its body, back, and tail! (See photo on page 20.)

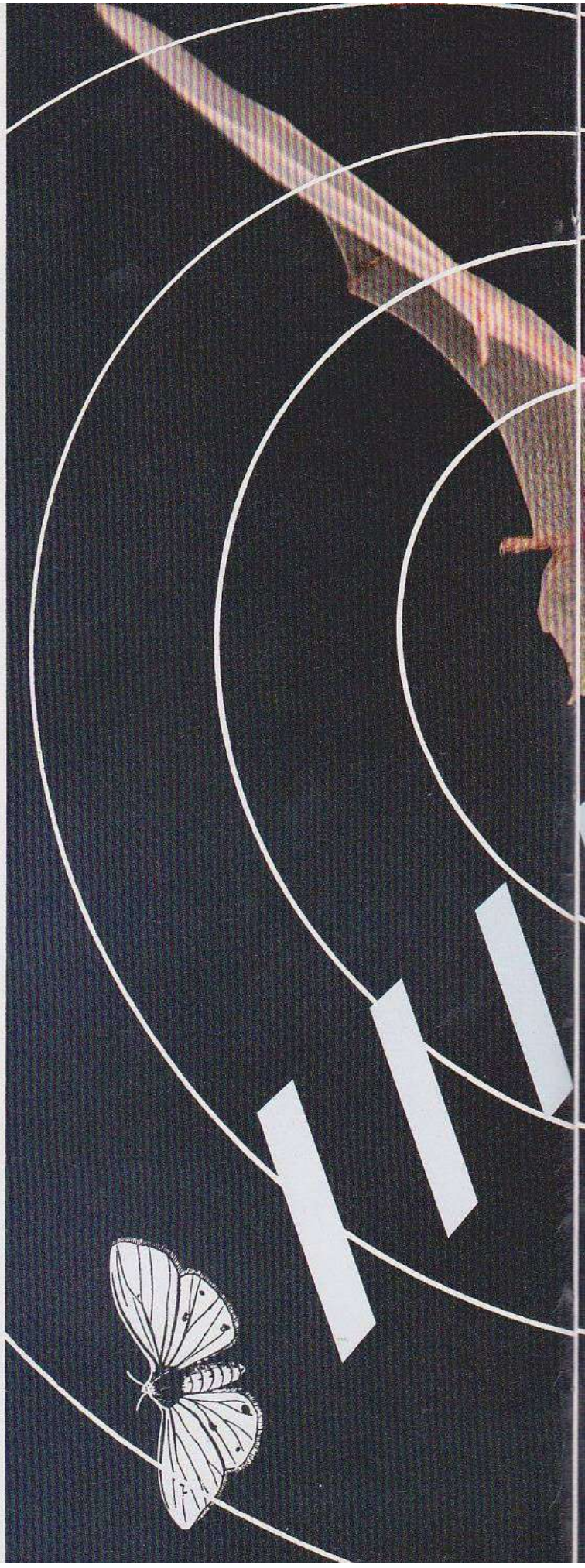
Are bats blind?

No, they are not. The expression "blind as a bat" is false! All bats have good eyesight, but most bats don't use their eyes to hunt or fly at night. Many years ago scientists blindfolded some bats and discovered an amazing thing—the bats could still catch insects. They could even fly around without bumping into hundreds of piano wires strung across a room! Even in a pitch-black cave, thousands of bats can fly around without crashing into one another.

How do bats know where they are going?

Bats fly by *echolocation.* ► They use echoes to find food and to avoid flying into obstacles in the dark. In a sense, bats "see" with their ears.

While flying, a bat sends out sounds from its mouth or nose (white lines). These are short, high squeaks that bats can hear but humans can't.



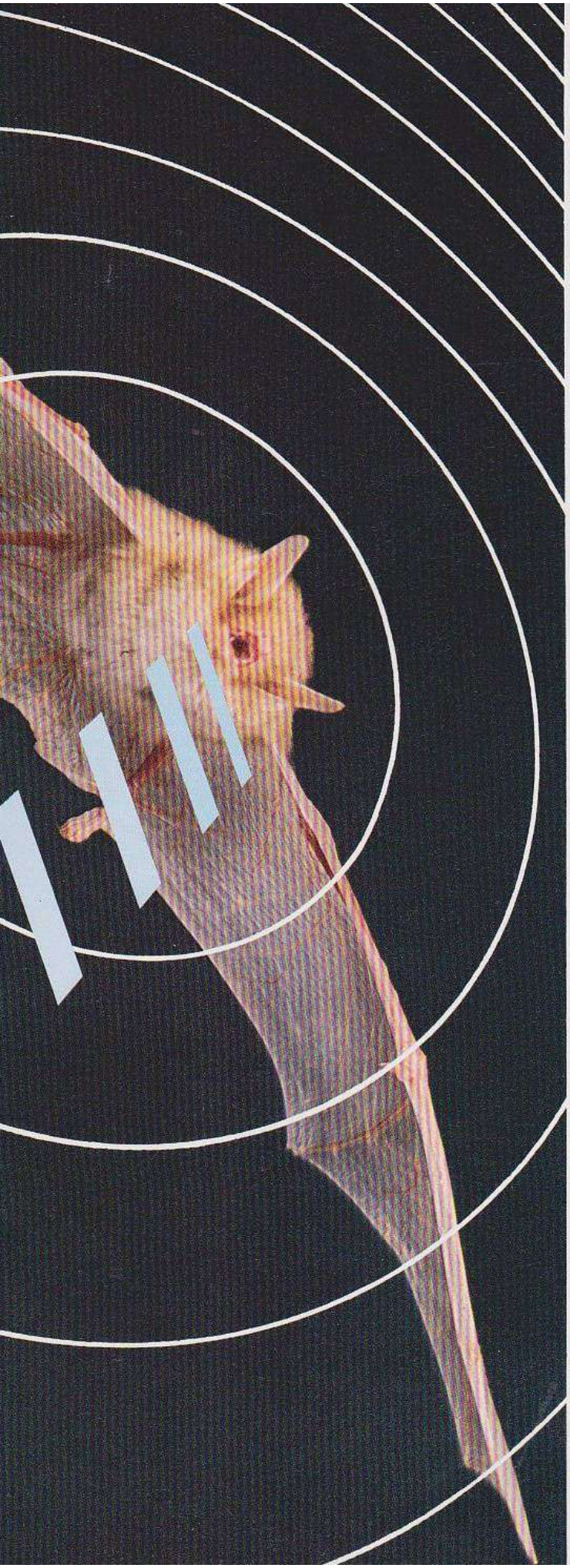


Photo by Ron Austing/Bruce Coleman Inc.

These sounds bounce off objects and echo back to the bat's ears (blue lines). Acting like a computer, the bat's brain figures out the echoes quickly and accurately. Right away the bat knows the size and movements of an object and how far away it is.

Do bats fly into your hair?

The age-old belief that bats delight in swooping into a person's hair is untrue. However, a bat may fly close to your head and that may frighten you!

Although most bats won't hurt you, *don't handle them.* Like most wild animals, a bat can become frightened if it is trapped or handled—and it may bite. Bats may have rabies, a disease that you can catch if you have been bitten by a rabid bat.

Are bats unclean?

No. Bats have a strong musky odor, but they are not unclean. A bat spends at least an hour every day washing itself with its tongue like a cat. Bats also wash after eating, and they groom themselves by combing their hair with their toes.

What do bats do during the day?

Tropical fruit bats sleep in trees during the day, hanging by their toes. Most North American bats roost in dark places—rocky crevices, hollow trees, attics or nooks and crannies around buildings. Some bats use the same "bedroom" every day. Others take shelter wherever they find it. Caves are favorite roosts for large colonies, especially in the winter. In the Southwest, many bats use limestone caves as summer nurseries for thousands and thousands of baby bats. Some caves have wall-to-wall bats! For example, Bracken Cave in Texas houses an estimated

Please turn the page

twenty million bats! When they fly from the cave at twilight, they cover the sky for miles —like a giant cloud of smoke.

Where do bats go in the winter?

North American bats avoid freezing or starving to death during the winter in two ways. Many migrate to warmer regions where insects are still active. Some bats hibernate during the winter in caves, attics, unused buildings or hollow trees, where they are protected from harsh winter weather.

During hibernation a bat's body processes slow down and this saves energy. Its body temperature drops. Its breathing almost stops—in some bats it drops from about *200 breaths a minute* while awake to *10 breaths an hour* when hibernating. During its winter-long deep sleep, a bat lives off the extra fat it gained during the late summer.

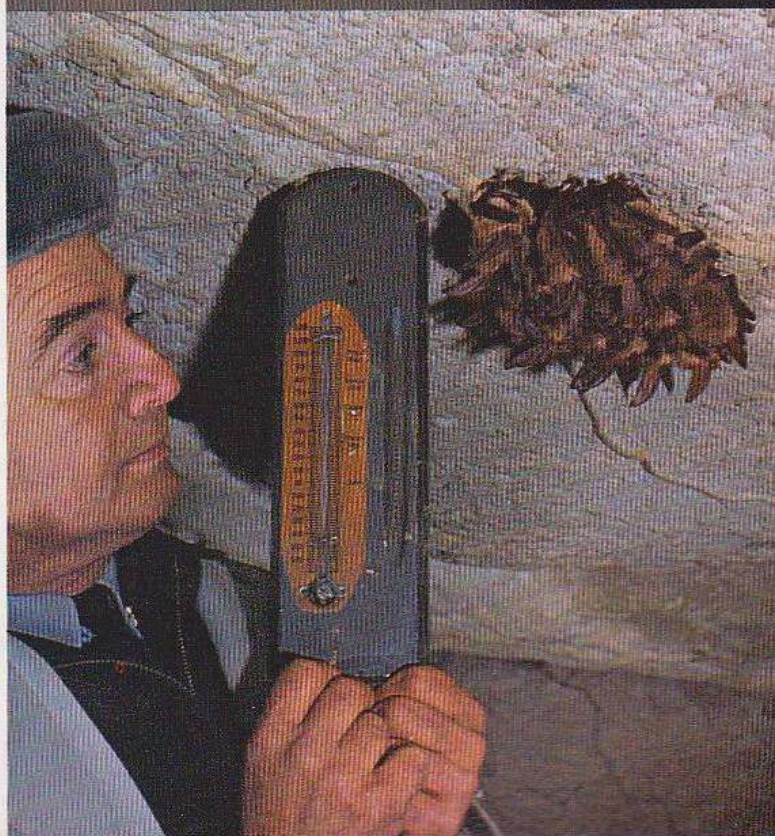
Why learn about bats?

Scientists all over the world are studying bat echolocation. There is a good reason. They hope to understand the built-in echolocation of bats, which works far better than any human-made instrument.

Doctors are curious about the ability of some bats to hibernate for more than six months. Is sleeping for a long time one way the bats manage to live so long? Usually the smaller the mammal, the shorter its life. But some bats may live for 20 years or more.

Why do I like bats?

They're such interesting creatures! Who wouldn't be fascinated by a harmless mammal that flies with its hands, "sees" with its ears, washes with its tongue and sleeps hanging by its toes? *The End*



Photos by S.C. Bisserot/Bruce Coleman Inc. (24); Charles E. Mohr (25)

A PLACE FOR THE CHILDREN!

PART II

by Oliver A. Houck

Rangers: In the August/September issue, King Oliver decides that he must find the answer for saving mountains, and beaches, and places to live for all his children. He begins to read a book about the United States to see if he can find the answer, but he falls asleep. He dreams . . . and his dreams take him on a great journey. We meet him now as he begins Dream 2.

DREAM 2

Overhead the sun was a yellow button on a bright blue shirt, crossed only by the shadows of seagulls calling in distant, rusty voices. The sand ran down to the ocean, and on its slope were a hundred little birds. *Crash,* came a wave and all the little birds ran back. *His-s-s,* the wave retreated, and all the little birds ran forward. King Oliver settled back into the soft, warm sand. His eyes closed.

"Off the beach, please!" announced a loud voice. "This is private property!"

The king looked around and rubbed his eyes. It was still a bright day, but he was in the shadow of a huge building. The wall was two feet from his head, and stood into the sky as if to reach the sun and fence it in. Bright lights blinked on and off at the top of the building, way up in the air, saying, "Hotel, Hotel." Dark waves crashed on the empty beach like wind against newspapers. The birds were gone.

"Off the beach, please!"

The king looked around, but there was no one in sight.

"You, in the funny bathrobe."

The voice came from a loudspeaker in the wall. Under the speaker was a door. King Oliver walked through the door and found himself on a wide street, with more cars and traffic lights than he had ever seen in all his years. The cars were full of families in bathing suits, children holding sand pails and rubber rafts. There were no trees along the street, no sidewalks, no one on a bicycle, no one walking. Just gas stations, drive-ins, motels and long, slow lines of cars as far as he could see.

"Mister?" asked a small voice from the back of a car. The king looked down and saw a girl with a plastic seahorse. "Do you know where the beach is?" she asked.

"Let me see," the king said. "I have just been there." He looked around where he had been, but all he saw was a wall with a sign saying, "Private—Keep Out."

"We have been looking for two days," said the girl, but her car was driving away.

The king shouted after her. "I will try to find it for you!"

He went inside the big "Hotel, Hotel" building. There, on a large beach towel, a pink man lay under a sunlamp.

"Ding!" went the pink man's wristwatch. "That's enough for that side," he said, getting up and poking his bright pink skin. "Not bad, eh?"

King Oliver cleared his throat. "I would like to speak with someone about the beach," he said.

"What about it?" asked the pink man, rubbing lotion on his belly.

"Well," the king began, "how do people get to the beach?"

The pink man looked up. "They got reservations?" he asked.

"Reservations for the beach?" the king said softly. "Do you mean that people can't get to the beach without reservations?"

"Look, you," said the man. "This beach is private property, *my* property!"

The king shook his head slowly, thinking of the girl with the plastic seahorse and the long lines of cars. "So the Beach is private all the way up and down?"

Please turn the page

The pink man nodded and poked at his sides, testing their color.

"And you do what *you* want with the Beach?" the king went on.

"You could say that," said Mr. Pink, looking impatiently at his watch.

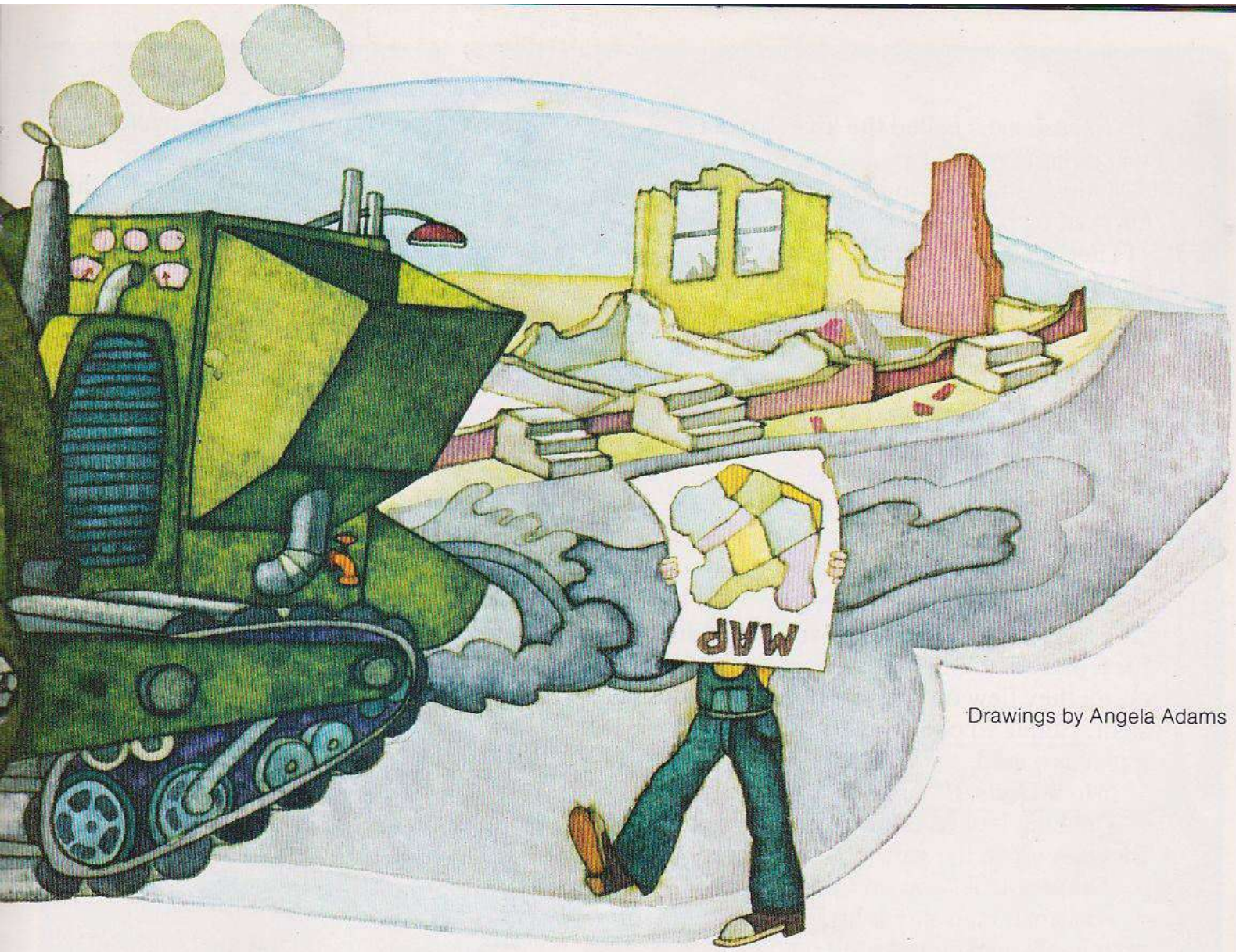
"But tell me, what about the girl with the plastic seahorse?"

The pink man pressed a button on the wall and stepped into an elevator. "Look, old man," he said, "this is a free country. You've got to pay for things in a free country." The doors closed, and he was gone.

The king looked at the wall, but the button had gone too. He ran down the hallway, but it ended at a door with no handle. In a panic he pulled at the walls and they came apart like curtains. There was the sky and the sea, and without a sound the king floated out to join them, floating peacefully over the sounds of waves and seagulls.

DREAM 3

King Oliver drifted over a city with rows of houses, rows of laundry lines, and clothes of all colors hanging in the sun to dry. In a yard below, three girls were painting faces on a fence—round, piggy faces with moustaches.



Drawings by Angela Adams

In the alley behind them two boys were riding their bicycles no-handed, weaving back and forth like swallows. The king landed softly behind a line of freshly washed socks. *What a nice place for people to live,* he thought.

Just at that moment the noise began, like dragging a huge shovel on the street. The girls stopped painting faces on the fence, and the boys got off their bicycles. People came out of their houses, families carrying suitcases and pillows, and they all walked away. The laundry hung still on the lines. Everything was quiet.

Down the street the noise began again, a giant shovel on stone. The king looked and saw a house fall down. *"Crunch! Boom!"*

Another house fell down. The king ran down the alley. Now he could see that on the other side of the houses, a huge machine was pushing toward him. Part bulldozer, part wrecker, it had a ball and chain over the front and a giant shovel blade. As it moved, a great sea of wet concrete bubbled out the back. Alongside the great machine walked a small man reading a road map. The small man pointed at the next house.

"Crunch!" the ball swung into the house.

"Boom!" the house fell down.

"Slurp!" another glob of concrete came out of the rear end.

"Yum! Yum!" roared the machine.

Please turn the page

"Excuse me," called the king. "What are you doing?"

"Oops!" said the small man and he turned his road map around. "I had it upside down."

Then he looked at the king and said, "I am building a highway. Can't you see?"

Behind the machine the concrete stretched forever, as wide as the ocean and dead as cardboard.

The king was speechless. Finally he said, "Look what you've done to the land."

"Oh, we'll take care of that," said the man, following a line on his map with his finger.

"How?" asked the king.

"We're going to paint it green," said the small man. "Just like Nature."

A flock of redbirds flew over, searching for a place to land. Finding nothing but concrete, they flew on past the houses and out of sight, calling to one another, still looking for a place to land.

"More Houses!" rumbled the machine.

The king looked at the houses ahead. Bicycles lay in the yard.

"Do people let you do this?" he asked.

The small man shook his head, stuffed the map in his pocket and took out another, saying to himself, "I was *sure* this was Chicago." Then he looked at the king. "People *have* to have more cars and more highways," he said.

The king looked surprised. "What about trains and buses? Couldn't they ride in trains and buses sometimes? Then they could keep their houses . . ."

"Noise! Noise!" bellowed the machine.

"Easy now," said the small highway man to his machine. "He didn't mean it." Turning to the king, he said, "We don't build many trains and buses anymore."

"Well, how about trolley cars?" asked the king.

The machine gave a satisfied *"Burp!"*

"We have paved over all of the trolley car tracks," the man replied.

"Well, couldn't people ride bicycles?" the king went on. "Bikes are so much smaller and you can put groceries right in the baskets."

The machine growled again, a deep sound like stones rolling at the bottom of a sewer.

"We don't build many bicycle paths, do we?" the highway man said quickly to his machine, patting its metal sides.

"No trains, no buses, no trolleys, no bicycles," said the king. He looked at the side of the highway. "I don't even see any sidewalks. No wonder you build more highways!"

"Noise! Noise!" went the great machine as it strained forward toward the next house.

"But who decides to build these highways rather than make trains or bike paths?" the king shouted over the machine noise.

"Crunch!" went the ball into the house wall.

"Boom!" the house fell.

"Slurp!"

"Yum! Yum!"

"Easy, boy," said the small man, running to catch up. The machine slowed for a moment and grumbled.

"Who decides?" cried the king, moving after him.

The small man cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted back, "The more highways we build . . ."

"Crunch!"

". . . the more people drive on them."

"Boom!"

"And the more they drive . . ."

"Slurp!"

". . . the more we have to build."

"Yum! Yum!"

The king was running hard now to stay close to the small man, who was running hard to keep up with his machine.

"But doesn't *anyone* decide?" shouted the king over the noise, and falling slowly behind.

"Of course!" the small man yelled back over his shoulder as the machine, in high gear now, knocked down three houses with a single blow.

"Who?" called the king desperately as he stumbled and fell and the world swam about him.

The only reply was the roar of the great machine.

Bang! King Oliver's book fell to the floor. *Where am I?* thought the king, jumping to his feet, but as he saw his advisors in his royal chamber he remembered. "I was reading about The United States of America. I must have fallen asleep."

Please turn the page

The eldest advisor sat up and rubbed his eyes, for he had been asleep too. "Did you learn anything?" he asked.

"I learned some *wrong* things," said the old king, remembering his dreams. "America is not like the pictures in the book. They have problems too, like ours . . ."

"But do you have the answer?" asked the old advisor.

"How to have mountains . . ." asked another.

". . . and beaches . . ."

". . . and nice cities for children to live in?"

The old king walked to the window. "*I* don't have the answer," he said, "because this is a free country, and not for kings to decide. But I have learned who *does* have the answer."

"Who?" they asked.

"The grownups," said the king, leaning his elbows on the window ledge to watch the late sun fall.

"The *grownups!*" said the eldest advisor, then the others . . .

"But *grownups* are the ones who are paving the mountains . . ."

". . . and walling off the beaches . . ."

". . . and using the big machines!"

The king spoke out the window. "Those are only *some* of the grownups," he said so softly that everyone leaned forward to hear him. "I mean *all* the grownups."

There was no sound but the breeze outside, until the king spoke again. "Do you think grownups love their children?" he asked.

Behind him the advisors nodded, "Yes."

"I mean *really* love them, enough to save mountains and beaches and cities for them?"

The advisors nodded again.

"Then that is the answer—to let *all* the grownups decide these things, not just *some* of them." The king clapped his hands together. "The grownups will get together, all of them that live near the mountains, and they will plan for the mountains to be there when their children grow up."

"And trees," said an advisor.

"And mountain streams," said another.

"And the grownups near the beaches will keep beaches for children," the king went on, turning to the room with the sunset glow in his eyes.

"But the machines?" asked the green and yellow page in a small voice.

Everyone looked at the king. "But the machines?" they echoed.

King Oliver stood tall above them. "The grownups can decide where the machines may go and may not go. They can even decide when to turn them off—if they love their children." He clapped his bony hands again and his voice rang between the hard stone walls. "They can do it," he said, "for their children."

"Page!" he turned to the green and yellow boy. "Call in the small people. Let us tell them that we have found the answer."

The green and yellow page went out the door, trumpet in hand.

"And while you are at it," shouted the king down the hallway, "bring some ice cream and cookies!" *The End*

Dear Ranger Rick,

I am writing to tell you how the 5 In The Out-of-Doors Club is doing.

After a nature hike, we were in my backyard and heard a scraping in a gutter. Guess what! We found a box turtle stuck in our drain pipe. We tried everything to help him but he sure was stuck. Finally we got a lubricant and squirted his shell. It worked! We washed him off and set him free.

5 In The Out-of-Doors Club, Parsons, Kansas

That was one lucky turtle! R.R.

Dear Ranger Rick,

Hi! I've been getting your magazine since 2nd grade. Now I'm in 6th grade. I'd just like to tell you that I love your magazine. It helps me in school.

My mom uses them to teach her Brownie group about nature. My sisters use them too. I just hope you keep printing them.

Your reader, Cindy Parker, Age 11

You bet we will, Cindy! R.R.

Dear Ranger Rick,

I live in Naugatuck, Connecticut. For more than 100 years the Naugatuck River has been polluted by waste from many factories. A few nights ago I heard on the radio that fish are back in the river just a few miles from us. I am glad something is being done about this pollution.

Grace O'Reilly, Naugatuck, Connecticut

So am I, Grace. Other rivers and lakes are becoming less polluted because people care! R.R.

Dear Ranger Rick,

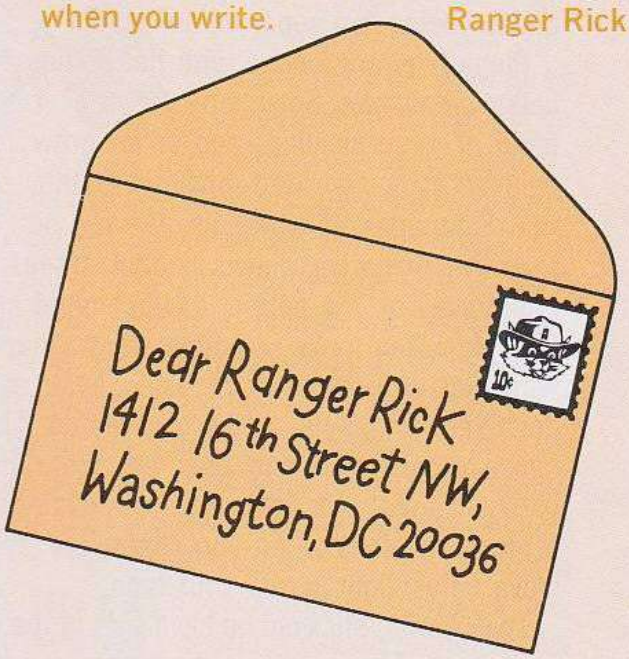
The sparrow pictures in the December 1974 issue reminded me of the one I helped to free last spring. Its foot was tangled in a piece of plastic string. This kind of string is very strong, but shreds easily. It is used to wrap almost all packages and bundles in Japan today. Perhaps you could warn other Rangers to pick up pieces of string lying around as they can be a problem for the birds. (It took several minutes of snip, snip, snipping to free this bird!)

Billy Tyndall, Age 6, Kobe, Japan

Rangers: Getting tangled in human junk is a problem many animals face every day. On page 39 you can read about how fishing line can cause lots of trouble (and not just for the fish!). R.R.

Hi, Rangers. Whew, what a job we had getting moved and settled in our new Washington offices! I just wish some of you could have been here to help. Ollie, Cubby, Zelda and all my editor and artist friends were busy packing and unpacking for weeks. We don't want to miss any of your great letters and drawings and other mail, so be sure to use my new address when you write.

Ranger Rick



HALLOWEEN

Halloween and its haunts are scary to me.
I think I'll run home.
I think I'll go to bed.
Would you like to come with me?
Night, night!
ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

Jonathan Elliott Taylor, Age 7, Macon, Georgia

GRAY GEESE

The gray geese fly
Like clouds in the sky
Their journey south beginning.
And you will see
In the shape of a "V"
Their sleek, gray bodies winging.

Rosemary Trudeau, Age 13, Sans Souci, Ontario, Canada

by E. Norbert Smith

Most animals reproduce by laying eggs or by giving live birth to their young. But some creatures reproduce in a very unusual way—they split!

Animals called planarians (plah-NAIR-ee-anz) can mate and lay eggs. But some kinds of planarians can also divide in half in the middle of their soft bodies. The "head end" then grows a tail, and the "tail end" grows a head. One animal splits apart and becomes *two* separate animals!

Planarians are worms with flat bodies and are called *flatworms.* Some are the size of a match head or even smaller—and some grow to be a centimeter or two long. Sometimes they stick to the undersides of water lily leaves, but usually they live in darker places—under stones, stems and leaves on the bottom of unpolluted streams.

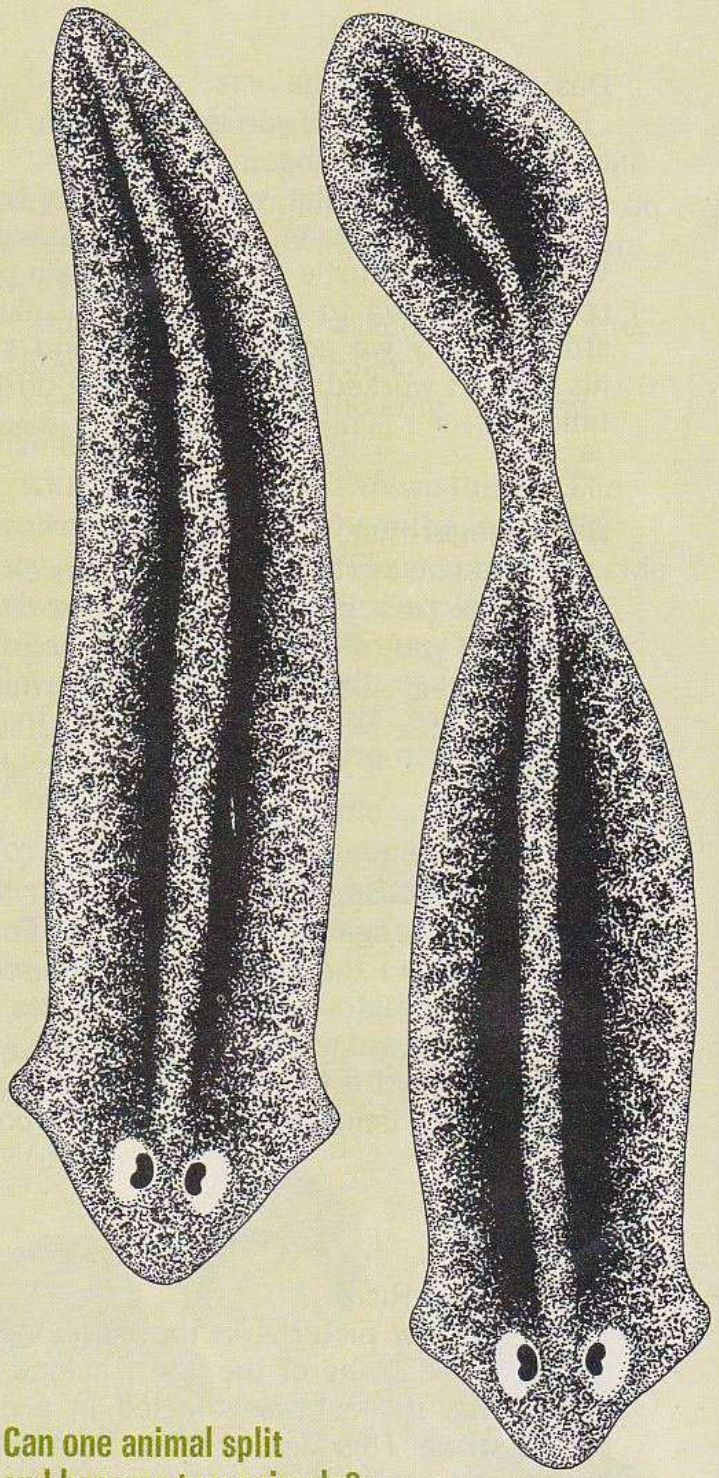
A planarian looks something like a flat arrow, with two little crossed "eyes." These eyespots don't see images the way your eyes do. They are sense organs that can only tell the difference between light and dark. You see something like a planarian does when you close your eyes and move a flashlight across your face.

Two "horns" stick out on each side of the planarian's head. These contain the animal's organs of smell. It crawls with them lifted like tiny feelers as it hunts for food. Planarians have a keen sense of smell and will follow an odor several meters.

Let's take a trip to the bottom of a stream and watch how one planarian splits and becomes two separate flatworms:

It is a cool night, and a well-fed planarian is crawling over stems and algae-covered stones. All of a sudden the body pinches in at the middle. The tail end grips a stone and hangs on tight. But the head end continues to crawl!

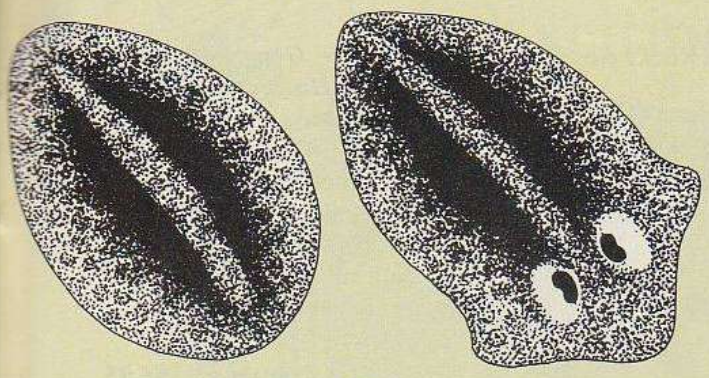
A tug-of-war begins. The head end pulls harder and harder. The tail end clamps on even more tightly and actually tries to crawl backward. The tug-of-war may last several hours, but finally a strange thing happens. The flatworm breaks apart! What was once a complete worm is now two pieces.



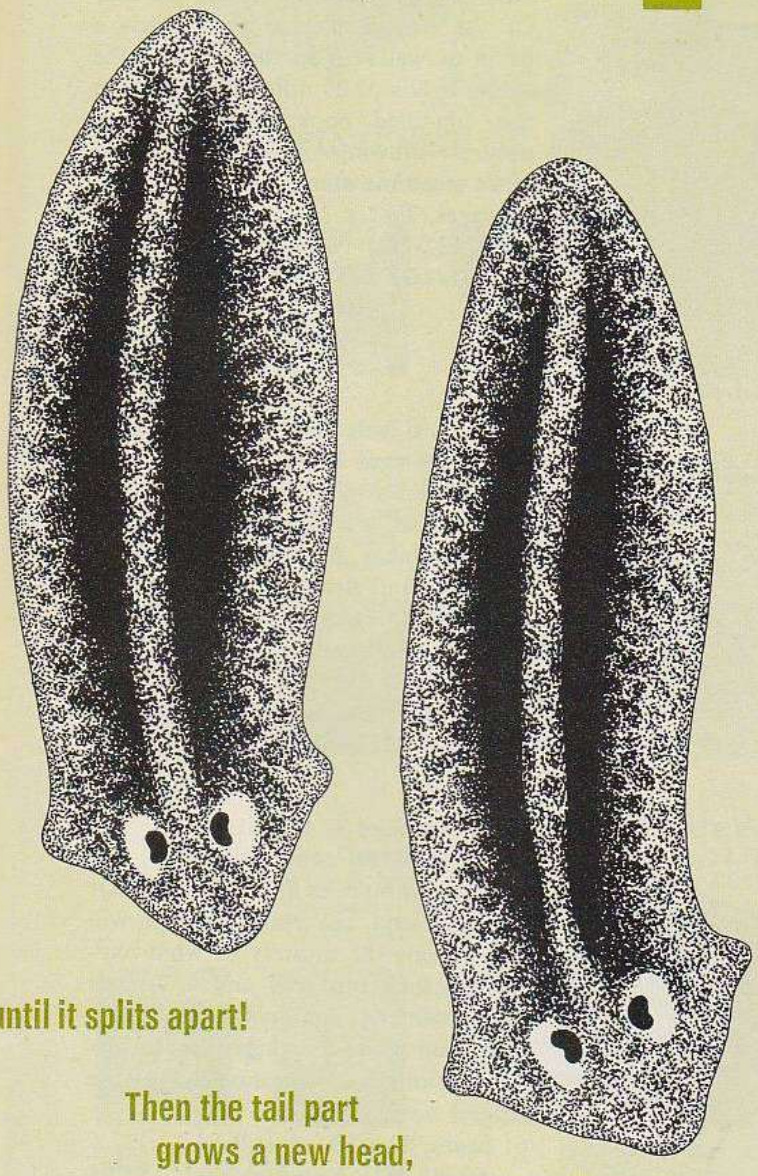
Can one animal split and become two animals?

This planarian can. Its body squeezes in—closer and closer . . .

Drawings by Sarah Landry



Let's split



until it splits apart!

Then the tail part
grows a new head,
and the head part grows a tail.

The head end crawls away. Instead of dying, it will grow a new tail and begin feeding within a few days. Within two or three weeks it will be ready to split again.

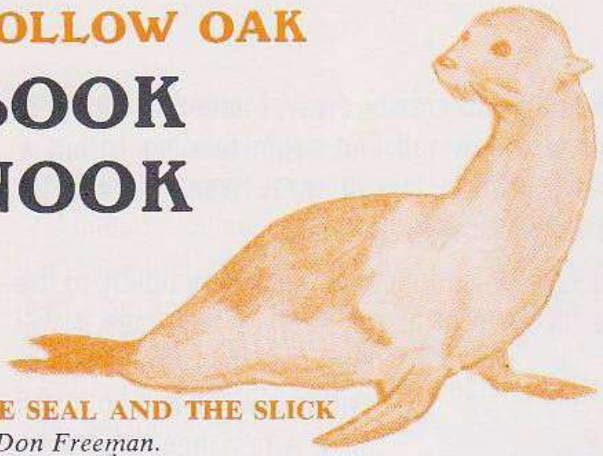
The tail end continues to stick very tightly to the stone for several hours. After a few days it will begin to crawl slowly about. Within a week or two it will grow a new head and start to feed and grow. After three or four weeks it, too, will be ready to reproduce again.

Planarians can also grow new parts after they are cut into pieces. Sometimes each piece grows into a new animal! This ability to grow new parts is called *regeneration.* Some other animals, such as sponges, can also be cut into pieces that grow into complete new animals. Starfish can grow a new arm if they lose an old one, and crayfish can grow new eyes or claws. But most animals can't regenerate missing parts. For example, you and other mammals can grow new hair or skin or fingernails, but you can't replace a missing fingertip by growing a new one. So these tiny planarians can do something we can't! This is one reason scientists have been studying planarians for years.

You can collect planarians by placing a small piece of beef liver in an unpolluted stream. Check your bait after 15 minutes. (If you have no luck, try "fishing" again at night when planarians are active.) Shake the worms into a container full of stream water. (Don't use tap water—it may contain chemicals that could kill the planarians.) Put stones and objects in the container to provide shaded hiding places. Do not put the planarians where the sun will shine on them. If they are in the sun, they will overheat and die. Feed your planarians pieces of beef liver or chopped-up earthworms twice a week. Remove the uneaten food after a few hours. Change the water every two weeks.

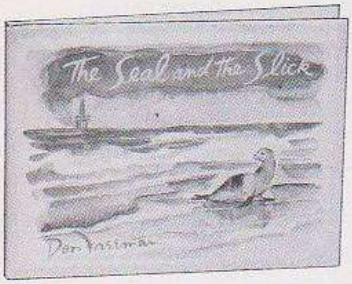
Keep watching with a magnifying glass. If you're very lucky—you'll see a planarian split! *The End*

HOLLOW OAK BOOK NOOK



THE SEAL AND THE SLICK

by Don Freeman.



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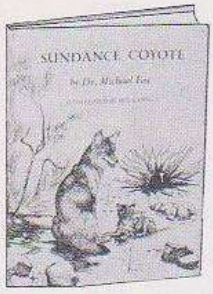

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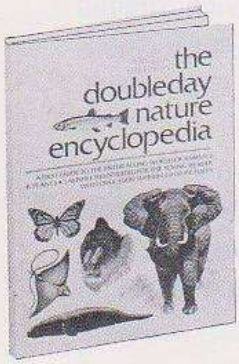

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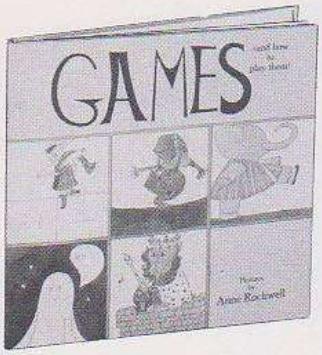

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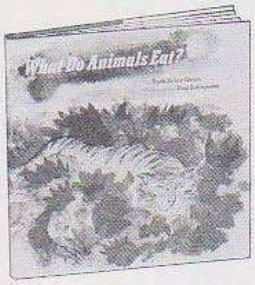

Do you know why the huge blue whale dines on the tiniest animals in the sea? Or the strange way a gibbon gets a drink of water? You can discover the eating habits of 25 different animals in this fun-filled book. Delightful and accurate drawings illustrate each animal's mealtime manners.

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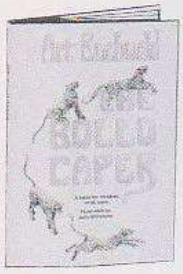

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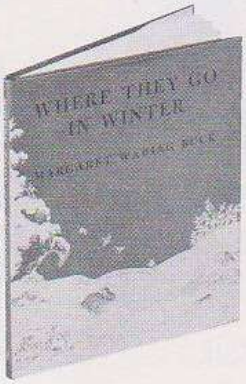

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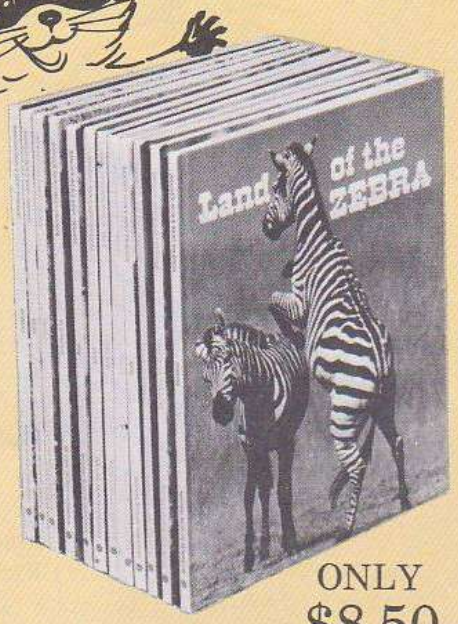

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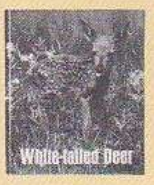

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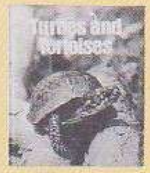

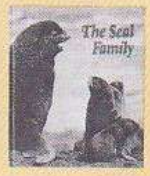

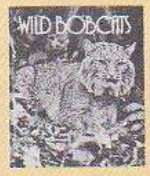

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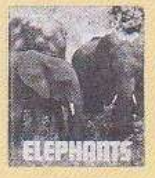

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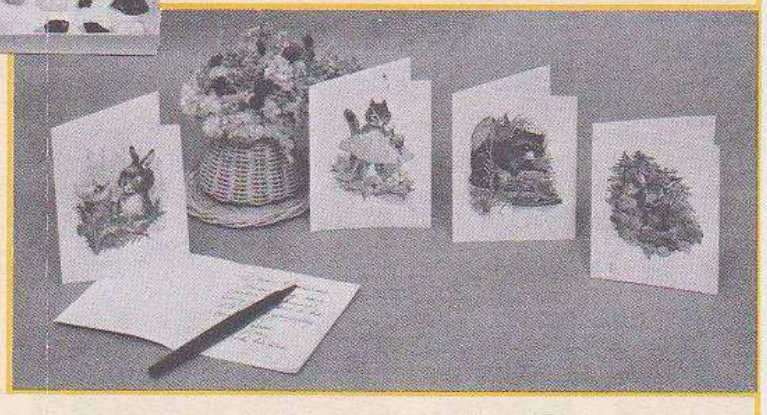

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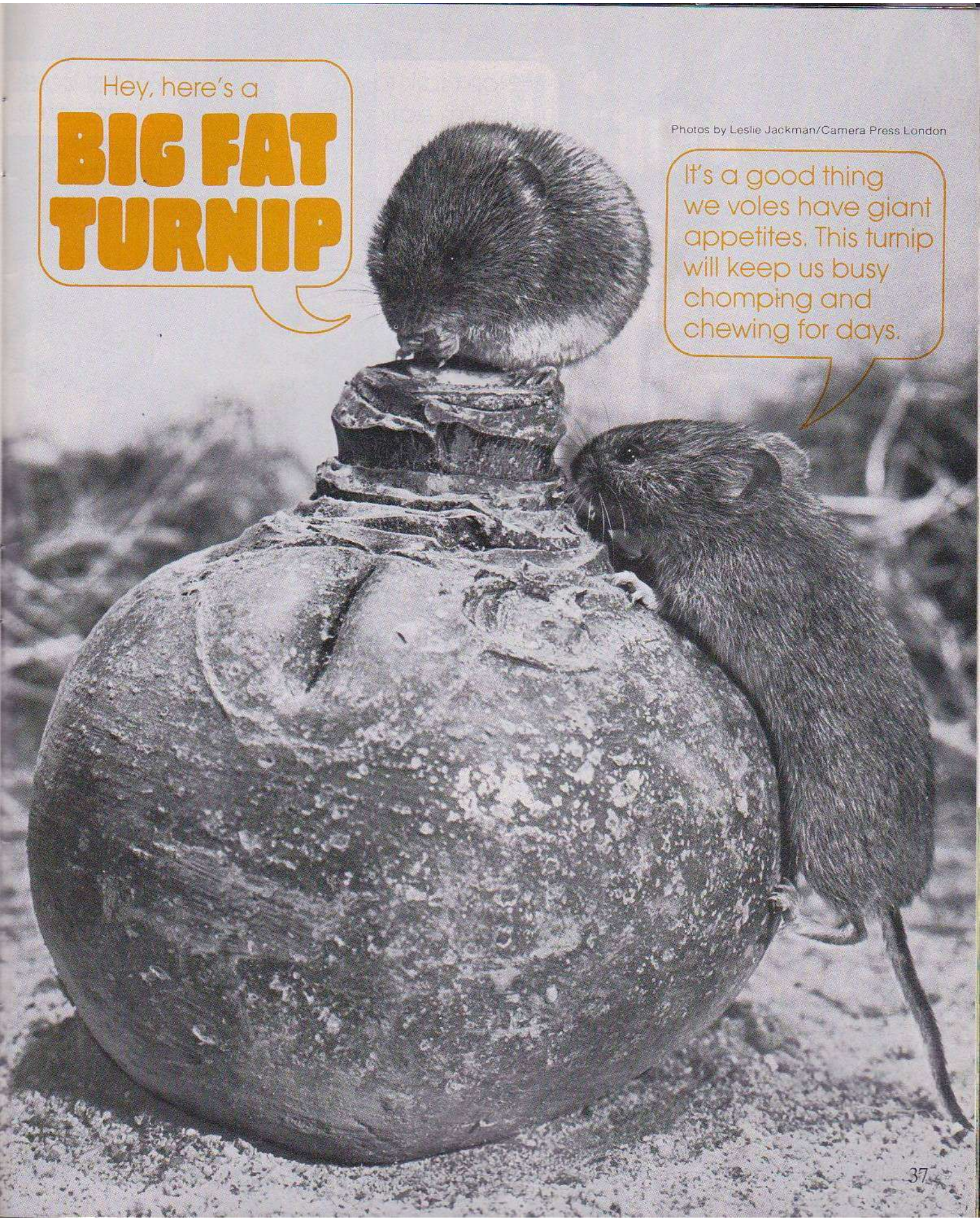
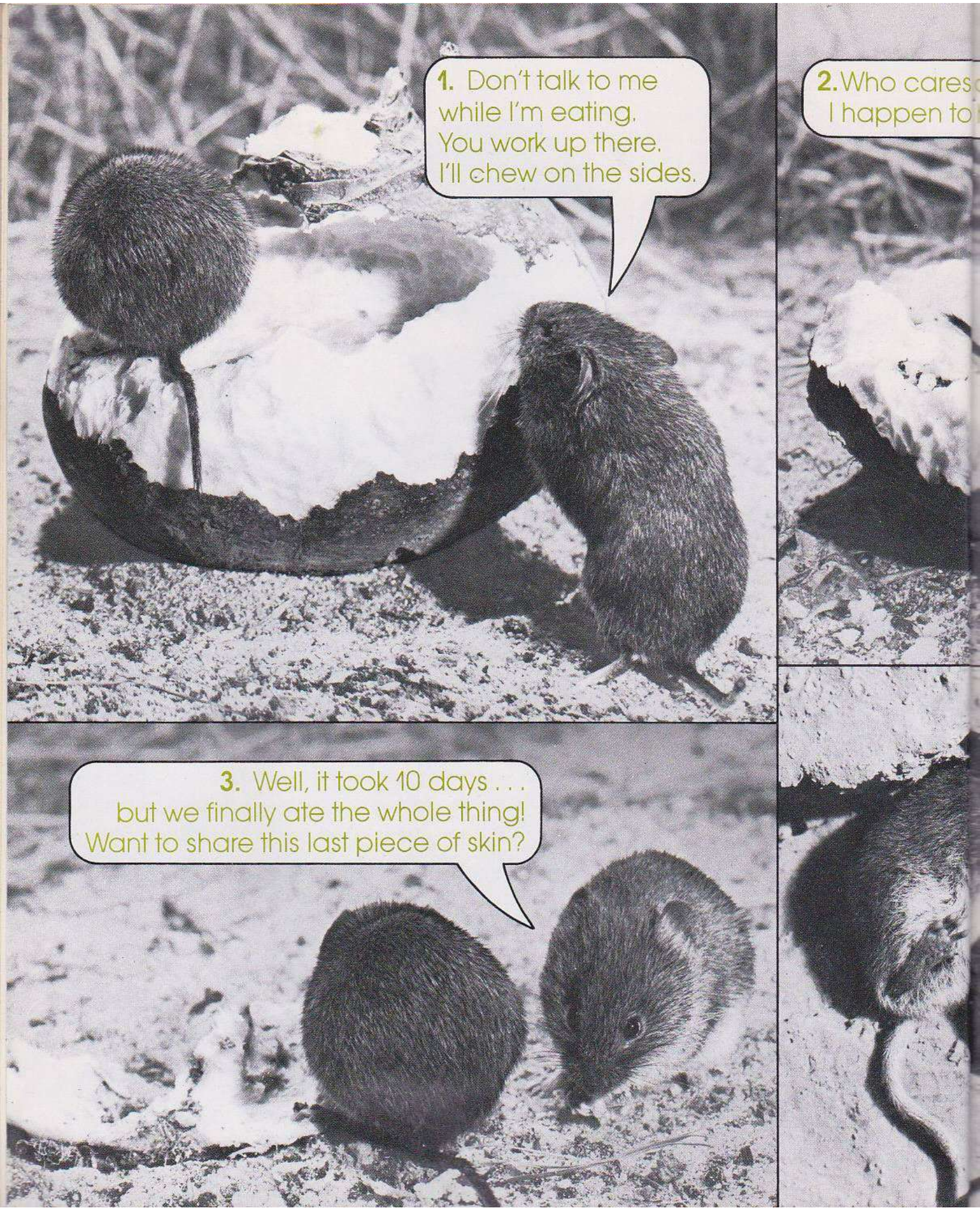
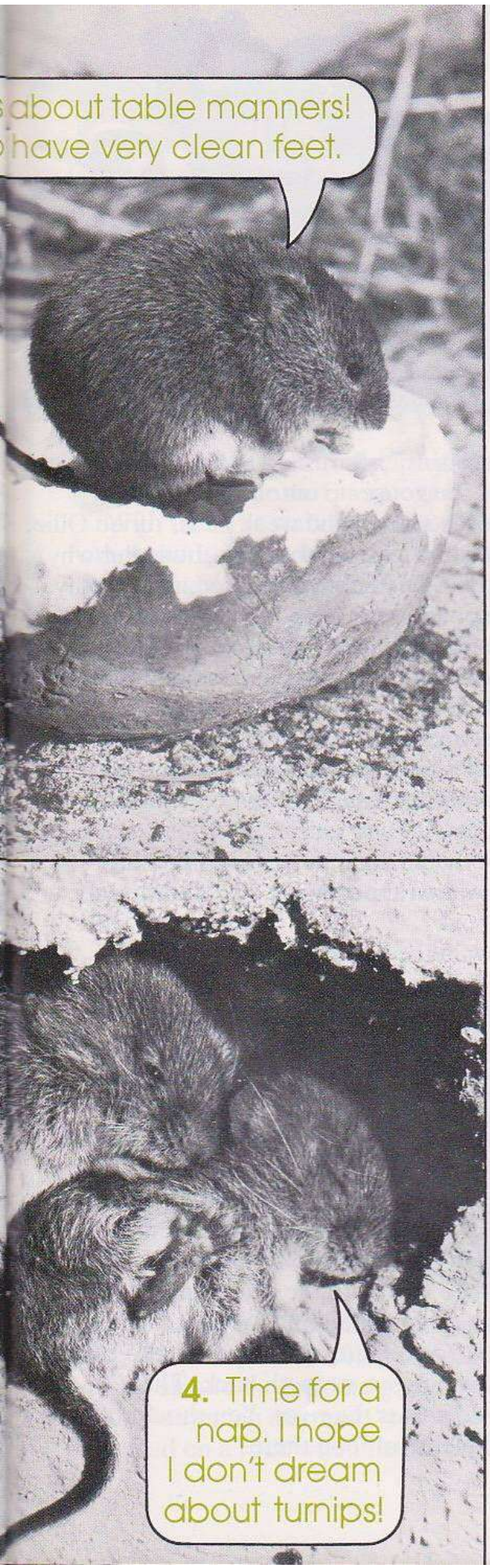
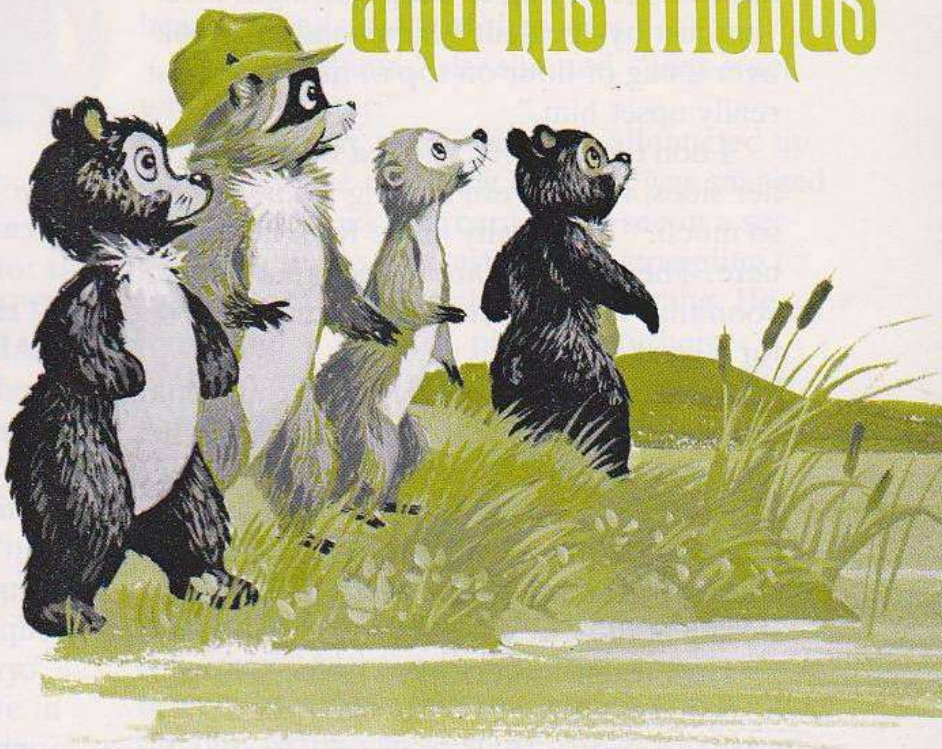

Hey, here's a
BIG FAT TURNIP
It's a good thing we voles have giant appetites. This turnip will keep us busy chomping and chewing for days.

Photos by Leslie Jackman/Camera Press London


1. Don't talk to me while I'm eating. You work up there. I'll chew on the sides.
2. Who cares
I happen to
3. Well, it took 10 days . . . but we finally ate the whole thing! Want to share this last piece of skin?



Ranger Rick and his friends



Adventure #84 Is fishing always fun?

by Robert A. Brownridge

It was a cold, gray fall morning. The wind was blowing out of the north and clouds hung low over the whole sky. Even though it was cold enough for a thin film of ice to form along the edge of Rushing River, Ranger Rick and three of his friends, Ollie Otter, Cubby Bear and his sister, Barbara, had decided to take a hike along the riverbank.

"It sure looks a lot different here now than it did last summer," chattered Barbara. "It was so green and warm, and there were lots of people fishing all up and down the river."

"Yes," giggled Cubby, "and some of them were pretty careless with their food around the camps. Remember that great big pail of honey we found? Boy, what a feast that was!"

Please turn the page

"And what a mess you made when you were trying to open it," growled Rick.

"Oh, you're just mad because when the top did come off, it fell on you and got your fur all sticky," laughed Barbara.

"I don't think it was *that* that bothered him," added Ollie, trying to keep a straight face, "but just by accident I happened to knock over a bag of flour on top of him too. That really upset him."

"I don't know why," added Barbara, holding her sides, which were hurting from laughing so much. "That really made Rick famous up here. They still talk about the great white raccoon that was seen running through the woods for a week."

"Very funny," snapped Rick. "You wouldn't have laughed so much if you had had to lick all that stuff out of *your* fur. Besides, it seemed like everybody in the country was out trying to catch 'that rare, white raccoon.' I couldn't stick my head out to eat without somebody staring at me."

"Hey, listen," interrupted Ollie. "Do you hear that noise?"

"Yes," replied Rick after a moment's silence. "It's a flock of Canada geese."

Just at that moment a huge flock of beautiful birds sped past, flying low just beneath the low-hanging clouds. They were heading south to their wintering grounds, where the waters do not freeze.

"My goodness, wasn't that spectacular!" gasped Barbara.

"They certainly looked big and well fed," said Cubby. "It must have been a good summer for them up in Canada."

"Oh my, look over there," called Barbara.

The others looked to where she was pointing just in time to see a lone goose struggling to catch up to the flock but barely able to stay aloft. As it passed overhead, the battle was too much and the bird tumbled awkwardly into the water nearby.

The four friends rushed to the bird and carried the goose up onto the shore.

"Look how thin and weak he is," cried Ollie. "He must be starving to death. I wonder why? All those others looked well fed and healthy."

The poor goose flapped his wings weakly and made some funny noises deep in his throat.

"Look, he's trying to tell us something," said Barbara.

"Yes, and I can see why he's probably starving too," said Rick. "His beak is all wrapped up with fishing line. He can't open it to eat or talk."

Quickly the animals removed the line, which was wrapped around and around the bird's beak.

"How in the world did that get there?" asked Cubby.

"Thank you," gasped the goose. "I got tangled up in that stuff while feeding near the shore of a lake up in Canada. The more I shook my head to get away from it, the more it got tangled. It's so strong, I couldn't break it. I couldn't open my beak to eat and I got weaker and weaker. Before I knew it, it was time to head south, but I just couldn't keep up with the rest of the flock. I thought it was all over when I fell into the water here."

"That's enough talking for now," said Rick gently. "You'd better get something to eat and start getting your strength back. There's a cornfield across the river. You should be able to find plenty of food there."

"I'm just too weak to fly," said the goose. "I'll take my time and swim over."

With that, the starving goose set out for the other shore. When he was halfway there, the four friends could see that the wind and current were too much for the goose and the worn-out bird was drifting downstream.

"He'll never make it," gasped Ollie.

"Go help him quickly," shouted Rick.

Almost before the words were out of his mouth, Ollie hit the water like an arrow.

"I hope he hurries," shouted Barbara. "That goose is drifting farther and farther away."

"He sure is," yelled Cubby, "but where in the world is Ollie? He hasn't come up for air since he dove in."

"I'll try to see what's happened," said Barbara. She leaped into the water with a huge splash.

She swam awkwardly but powerfully out to the middle of Rushing River. Every few seconds she would put her head under the surface to look around. Suddenly she stopped. Her head popped up out of the water.

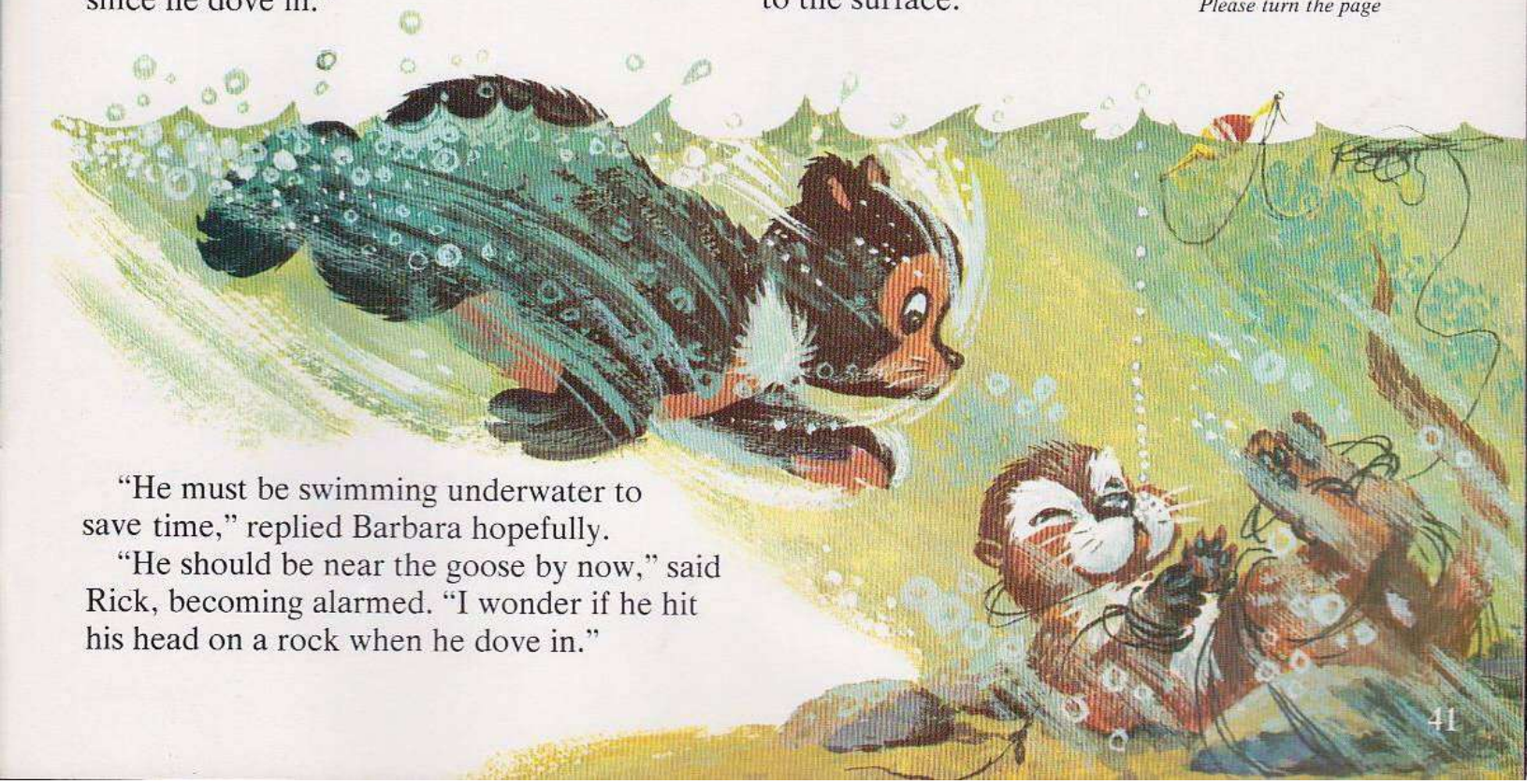
"I've found him," she shouted. "He's stuck under the water!"

Sure enough, there was Ollie all tangled up in a long piece of fishing line that was snagged under a big rock. Barbara could see in a second that he was exhausted from struggling to free himself and was close to drowning. He looked up at Barbara, pleading for help.

Down dove the powerful young bear. She wrapped the line around her paw and pulled, expecting it to break easily. But it didn't. Harder and harder she yanked, but still the slender line held fast.

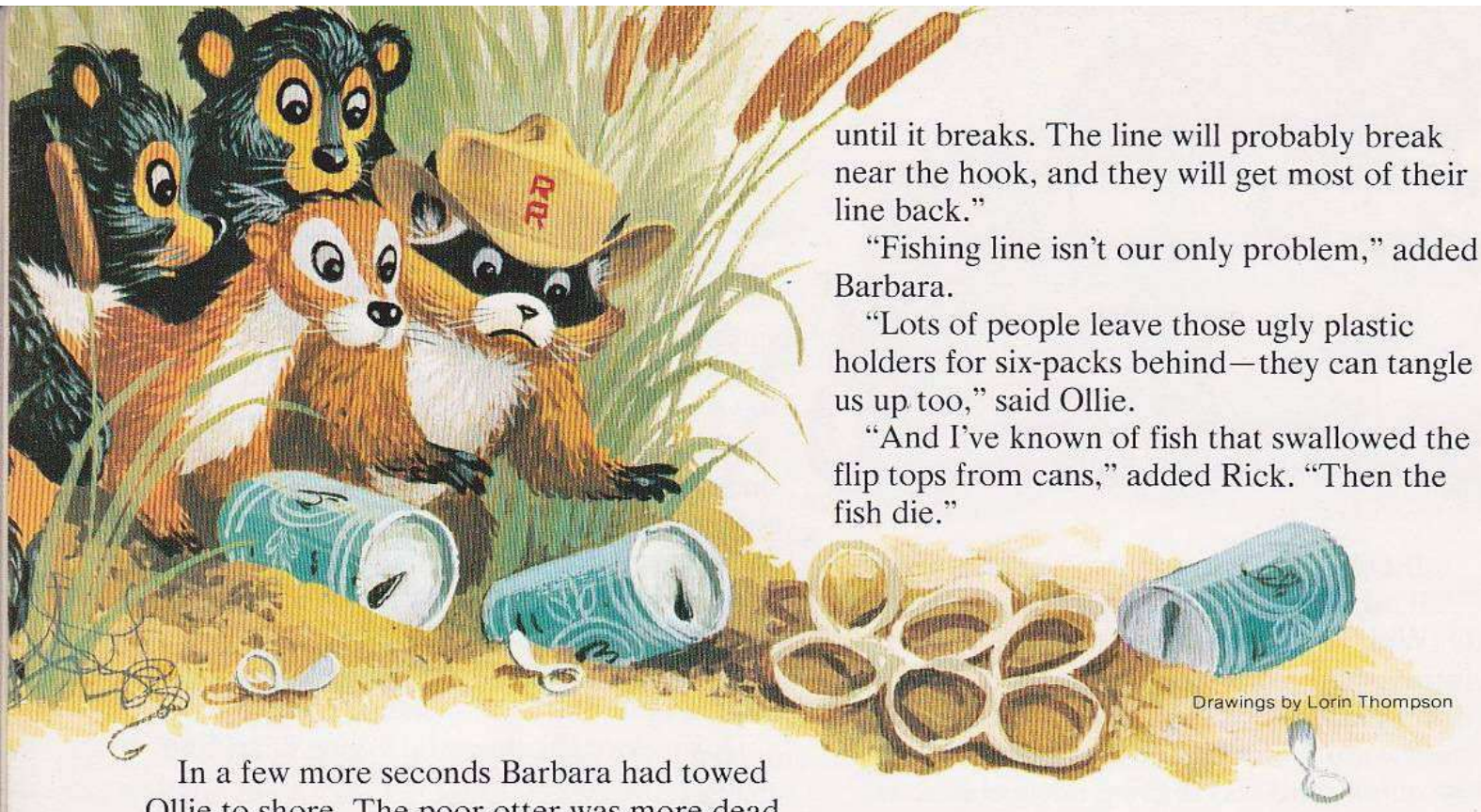
Barbara knew that Ollie could last only a few seconds more, but she didn't panic. Quickly she opened her mouth and bit the line with her powerful jaws and sharp teeth. *Snap* went the line. With a great shove she pushed Ollie to the surface.

Please turn the page



"He must be swimming underwater to save time," replied Barbara hopefully.

"He should be near the goose by now," said Rick, becoming alarmed. "I wonder if he hit his head on a rock when he dove in."



Drawings by Lorin Thompson

In a few more seconds Barbara had towed Ollie to shore. The poor otter was more dead than alive. Quickly she began giving him first aid, and after a few minutes Ollie started to recover.

"Thank you, Barbara," he gasped. "I really thought I was gone that time. I couldn't get away from that line or even break it, no matter how hard I pulled."

"That kind of line is hard to break," said Rick. "Ranger Tom was telling me about it the other day. It's called monofilament (mon-o-FILL-ah-ment) fishing line. He told me that the riverbanks and streams and shallow waters in some areas are full of it."

"Where does it all come from?" asked Ollie, still trying to catch his breath.

"Many people who are fishing just throw their tangled line away," answered Rick. "Ranger Tom says that instead they should bunch it up and take it home with them."

"Well, what about people who cut their lines when their hooks get caught way out in the middle of a stream?" asked Barbara. "There's no way of getting that line back to take it home with you!"

"You're right, Barbara," said Rick. "But instead of cutting their line they should yank until it breaks. The line will probably break near the hook, and they will get most of their line back."

"Fishing line isn't our only problem," added Barbara.

"Lots of people leave those ugly plastic holders for six-packs behind—they can tangle us up too," said Ollie.

"And I've known of fish that swallowed the flip tops from cans," added Rick. "Then the fish die."

"That's right," said Cubby. "People should be more careful with their trash. They should remember that animals like our friend the goose can easily get hurt."

"The goose!" they all shouted at once. "What has happened to him?"

They ran along the bank of the river, looking for their new friend. They raced around a sharp bend in the river—and there he was—high and dry on the other side. The goose was happily eating in the cornfield. The current had carried him into a calm pool, and he had been able to drag himself to safety.

"Well, thank goodness," they all exclaimed with much relief.

"A couple of days in that field and he should be ready to fly off and join his friends," said Rick happily.

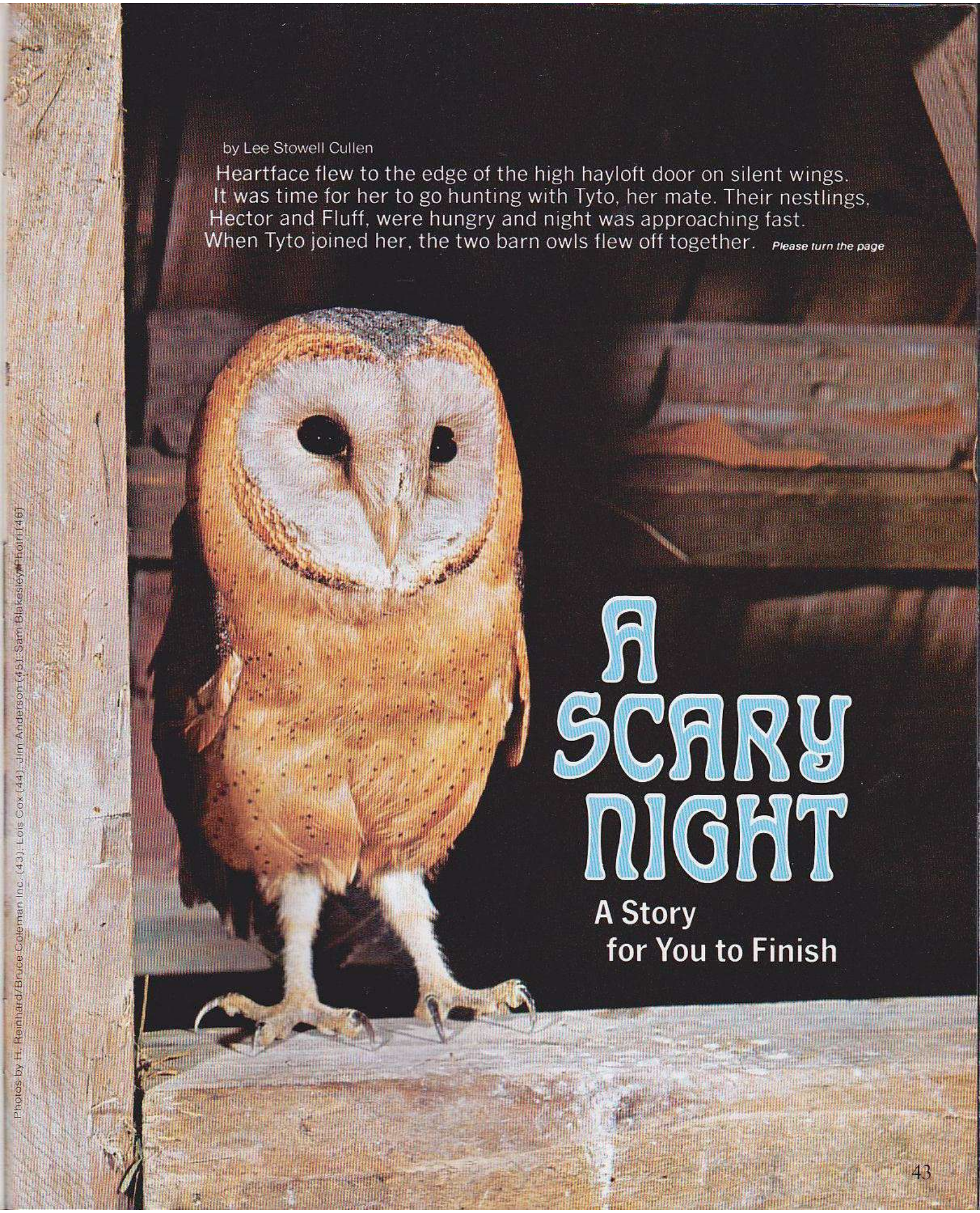
"I think we've had enough excitement for one day, so let's head back home."

"Let's go," said Cubby. "I'm getting sleepy."

"You were born sleepy," teased Barbara. "I never saw such a lazy bear."

"I guess everything's back to normal," laughed Rick as the four friends trudged off down the trail toward Deep Green Wood.

The End



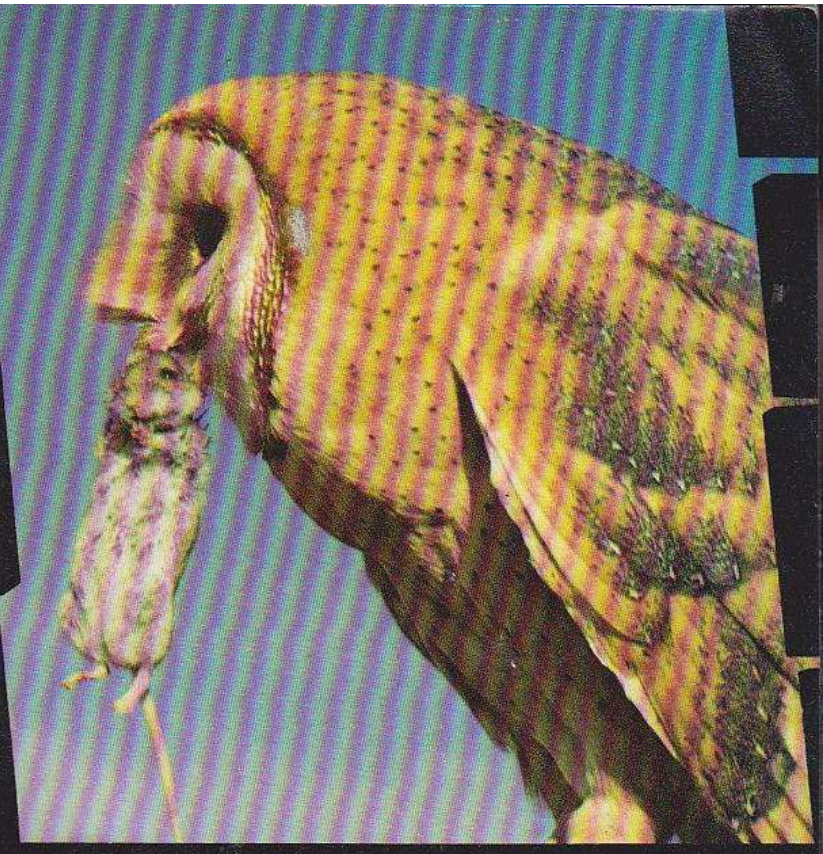
by Lee Stowell Cullen

Heartface flew to the edge of the high hayloft door on silent wings. It was time for her to go hunting with Tyto, her mate. Their nestlings, Hector and Fluff, were hungry and night was approaching fast. When Tyto joined her, the two barn owls flew off together. *Please turn the page*

A SCARY NIGHT

A Story for You to Finish

Photos by H. Reinhard/Bruce Coleman Inc. (43); Lois Cox (44); Jim Anderson (45); Sam Blakesley/Photri (46)



Hector and Fluff were very comfortable in their home in a rotted beam of the deserted barn. They were warm and dry and the chilly October weather didn't bother them. Soon their parents would return with food for their empty bellies.

The young owls scrunched down on the roost and listened to the soft sounds of the night. A twig snapped. The wind whispered through the leaves on a nearby tree, and a small creature made rustling noises as it scampered through the tall grass in the field outside.

Before long Hector fluffed out his downy feathers. His bright eyes closed and he was fast asleep. Fluff didn't feel at all sleepy. She was hungry and waited for her parents to return. She poked her head out of the opening in the roost and looked around. Soon the moon would come up, but now it was very dark. With her sharp eyesight, Fluff was able to see a small shed nearby and a cluster of houses in the little village a short distance away.

Suddenly her sharp ears caught the "*ick-ick-ick*" of her mother's flight call. Fluff hopped back into the roost and bumped Hector. His eyes snapped open and he let out a loud hiss. Heartface moved toward her babies, who were calling for food with strange snoring sounds. She quickly stuffed the mice she had brought them into their mouths.

Time passed. The days grew shorter and the weather colder, but Fluff and Hector were snug in their home. They grew quickly. Feathers the same colors as their parents' gradually replaced their soft white down. Tyto and Heartface were night hunters. Their keen hearing and eyesight made it easy for them to find food in the dark. Sometimes, though, when she was very hungry, Heartface would look for food during the day. One clear day she found an especially fat mouse. Her babies were well fed so she would enjoy this one herself. She swallowed it in one gulp.

On the very last night of October, Fluff was perched on the edge of one of the beams in the barn, looking out into the dark night. Lights glowed from the houses in the village, and a pale moon shone on the fields and trees. The young owl did not know it, but it was Halloween! It was a night for the village children to dress up in weird and spooky costumes and go "trick or treating." It was a night for ghosts and goblins, and the old barn that was Fluff and Hector's home was supposed to be haunted. When trick or treating was over, what better place for brave children to visit than the crumbling barn?

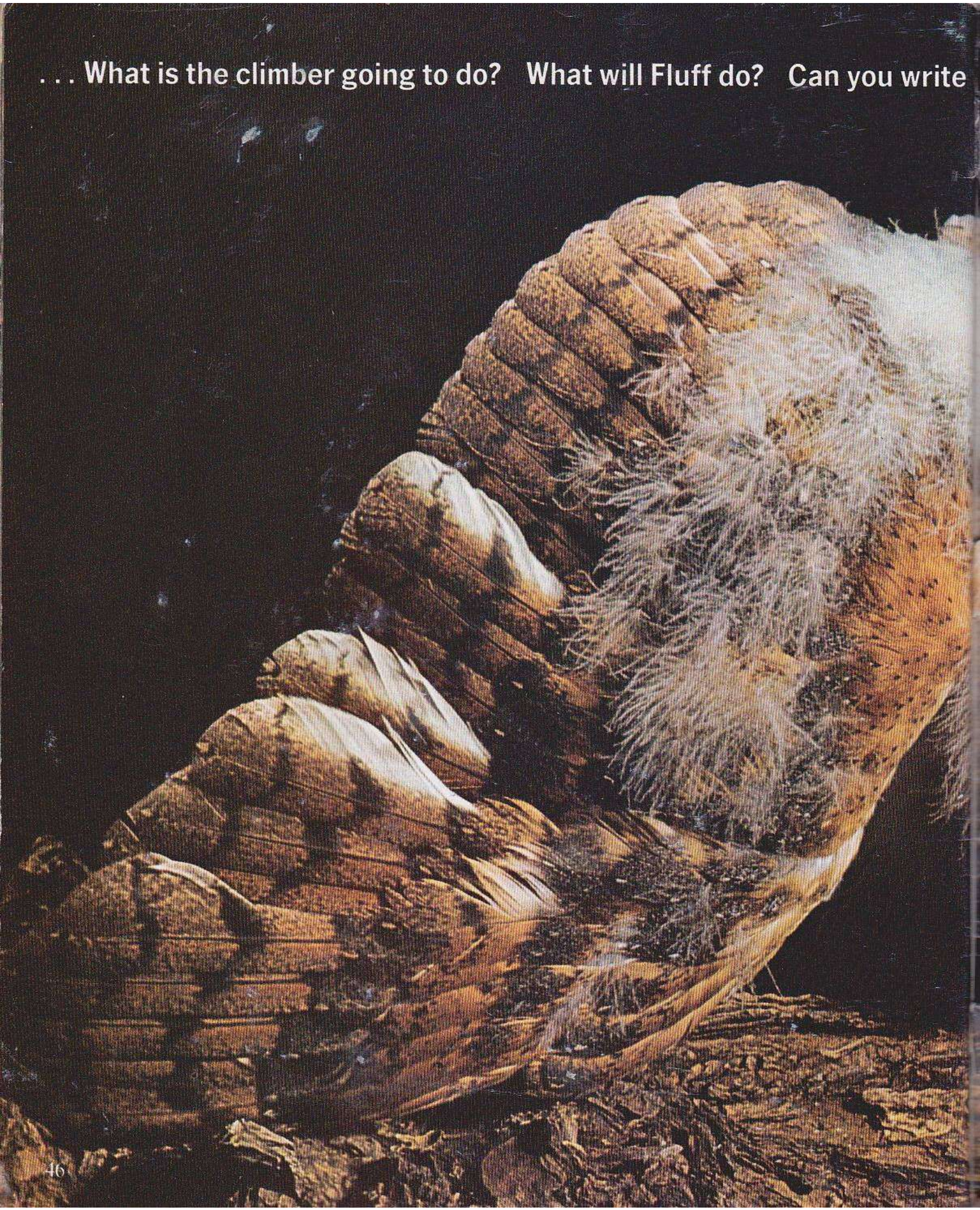
From her perch, Fluff heard noises below her. Her head swung around as she searched the darkness. Instantly she saw strange creatures crouching and swaying across the barn floor, making soft, whispering sounds.

Suddenly one of the ghostly creatures spotted Fluff. It pointed at her and began to act excitedly. Then the strange figure started to climb a ladder that reached toward Fluff's perch high in the rafters.

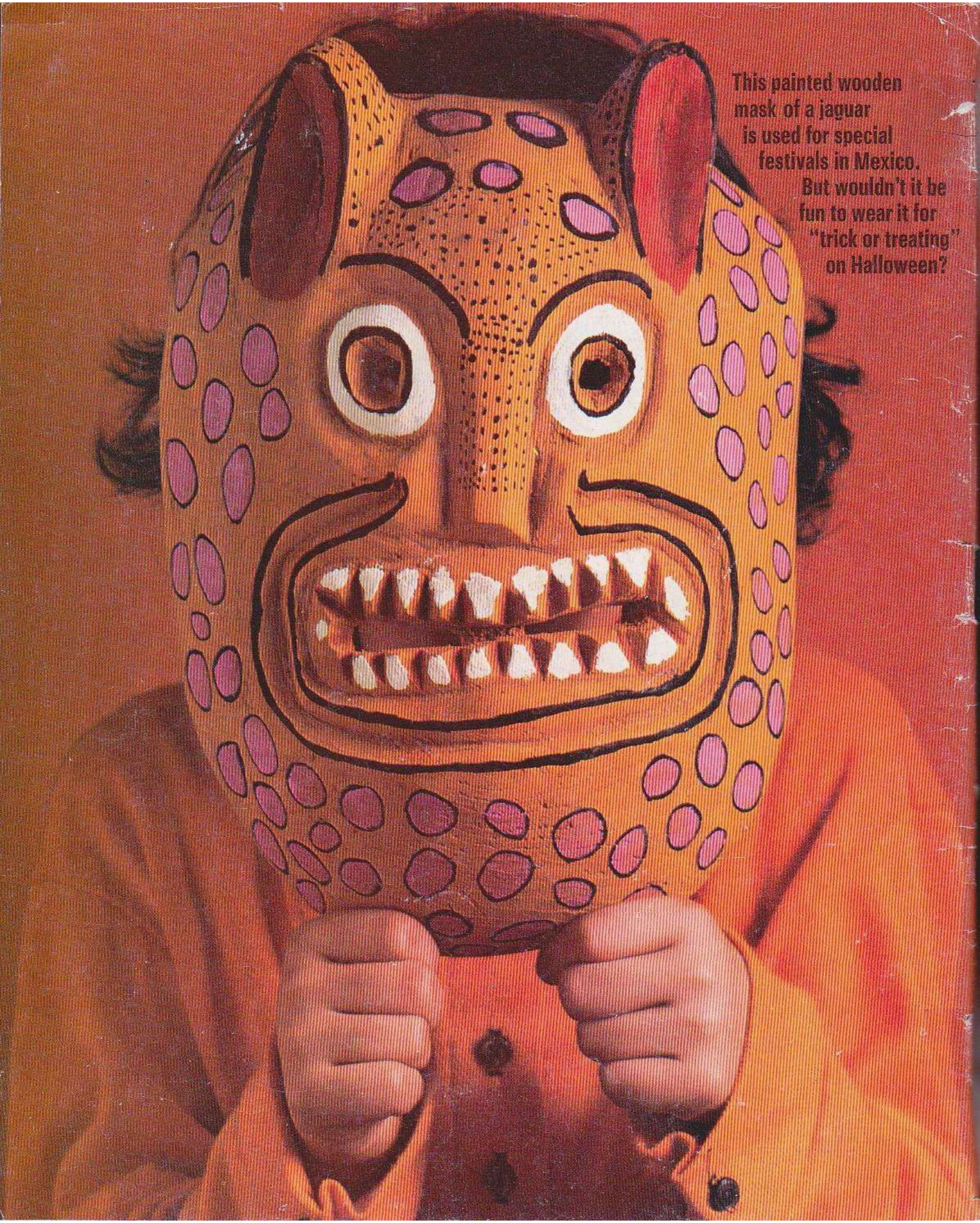
Instinct told Fluff that something was wrong. She spread her wings and hunched down. She looked fierce and dangerous. She started to swing her head from side to side. She hissed loudly and made sharp, rapid clicking sounds with her bill.

The climber stopped . . . .

. . . What is the climber going to do? What will Fluff do? Can you write



an ending for this exciting story? Send to Ranger Rick, Finish the Story, 1412 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.



This painted wooden mask of a jaguar is used for special festivals in Mexico. But wouldn't it be fun to wear it for "trick or treating" on Halloween?